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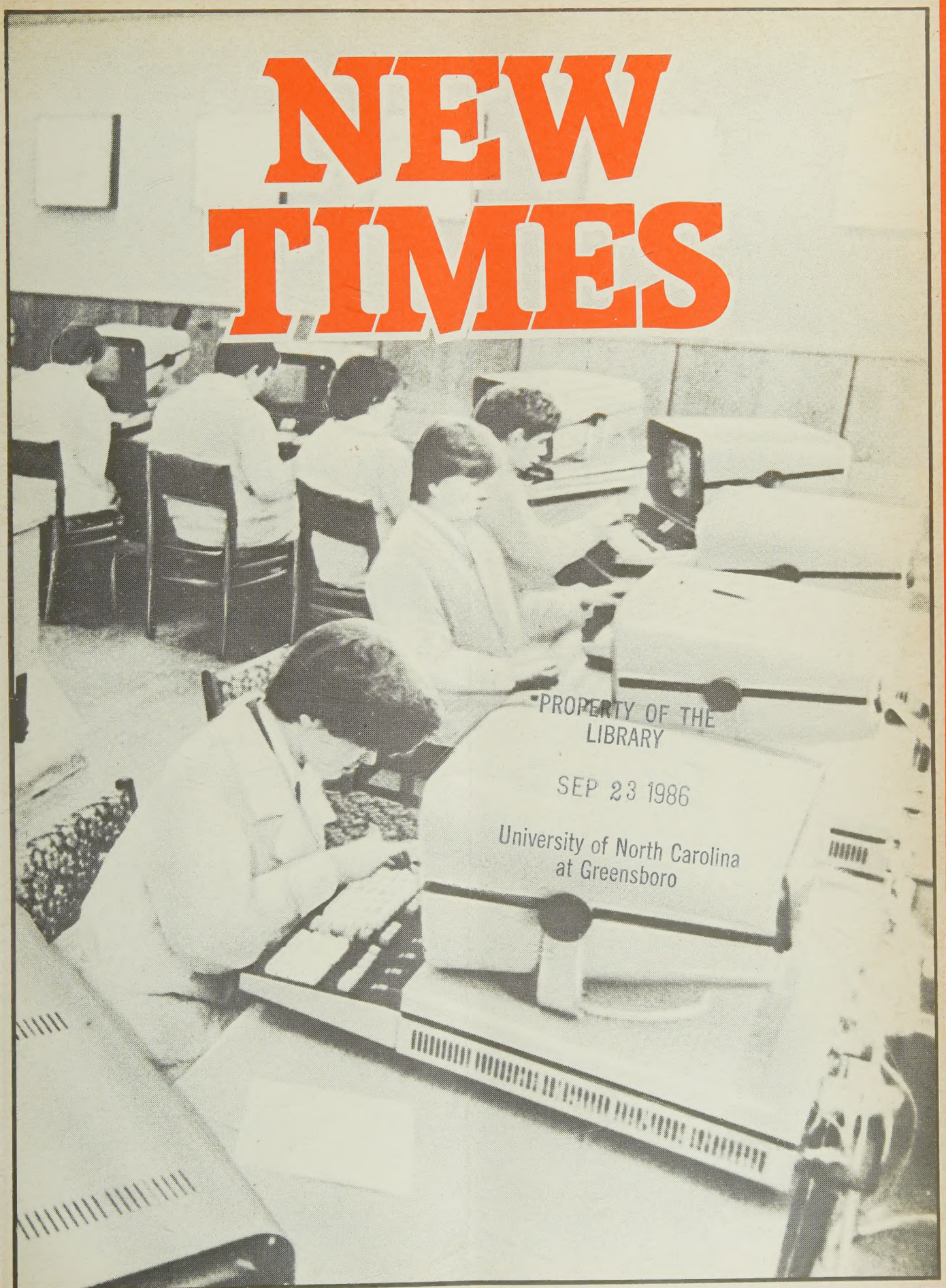
NEW TIMES



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There has been an increasing tendency in recent years to revive old traditions. One of these is the holding of annual fairs. In former times fairs were held at the intersection of trade routes and played an important role in economic life. But these fairs were never simply markets for the sale of wares. In the popular memory and in literature fairs were recalled as festive occasions. People flocked to them from towns and villages near and far. They brought their children, for whom there always were delightful sweetmeats and lots of fun. No one minded that the fair left their pocketbooks somewhat depleted.

More than two centuries ago the field outside the Svensky Monastery not far from Bryansk was the scene of a big fair. Recently, on the eve of the 1000th anniversary of that city, colourful booths and stalls reappeared there. The revived Svensky fair offered customers a wide variety of goods: grotesque toys, houshold utensils, various folk-style objects made on the spot by local craftsmen. Folk groups, home talent singers and musicians performed right on the "main square" of the fair and the lanes between the booths and stalls. So that contact between "artistes" and audience was total.

As in olden times the fair attracted not only the inhabitants of Bryansk but people from neighbouring parts of Russia, the Ukraine and Byelorussia. And they left laden with purchases and full of the pleasantest impressions. Resurrection of old traditions is not the only purpose of the fairs. They also help to revive old crafts and to stimulate the development of local handicraft industries whose output is always in great demand.

Photos by
V. Akhlomov

ONE MORE ACTION FOR PEACE

The subject of the first lesson of the school year at all Soviet schools was peace. That lesson was attended also by the boys and girls shown in their classroom on the cover of this issue. They will reach adulthood and launch out on independent life in the 21st century. What will the new century be like? Will it be a century of peace?

Listen to the silence enveloping the Soviet nuclear testing grounds. Listen to it and ponder over it. It is an offer and an augury of peace to all. It musters the will and stimulates thought. It is a lesson in courage, dedication to the truth and sense of responsibility. It teaches how to live like humans among humans.

It is not too late to learn. We are now living in a year which the United Nations proclaimed the Year of Peace. The very designation is a programme for the whole of mankind. History, that stern and impartial teacher, has set the most complex tasks for the governments and peoples, political parties and mass movements. These tasks can be resolved only by those who have learned to think in a new way, not in terms of the pre-nuclear age. Only by those who conscientiously, objectively appraise the changes taking place in the world.

On August 18 the Soviet Union passed another examination before History. By taking the by no means easy decision to prolong its moratorium on nuclear explosions until January 1, 1987, our country once again demonstrated that its dedication to peace is not just lip service, but action, resolute, bold, thoroughly considered and necessary action. This new step towards a world without nuclear weapons is one more tangible manifestation of the new, truly revolutionary, approach to foreign policy elaborated by the 27th Congress of the CPSU, of our philosophy and our morality.

The survival of humanity does not depend on us alone. "The problem of international security," Mikhail Gorbachev has said, "is a common problem, and hence it is a common concern and a common responsibility." What lessons must History still teach the leaders of the U.S. for them to realize this and refrain from irresponsible and arrogant behaviour in world affairs? Will a hearing be given to the call addressed to Ronald Reagan "once again to appraise without bias the situation that has arisen, to renounce everything extraneous, to overcome delusions as regards the Soviet Union and its foreign policy"?

Will the silence prevailing on our testing grounds be matched by silence in Nevada? On this in large measure depends what will happen in this and the coming century.

FROM OUR MAILBAG

The Soviet government's initiative in prolonging its moratorium on all nuclear tests is tremendous moral support for the progressive forces of our planet. It shows who really wants peace, who is working energetically to preserve life on this planet. Not those, of course, who continue to sow panic about the accident at a Soviet atomic power station, while they themselves are polluting the environment, exploding nuclear devices, developing chemical weapons and poisoning the atmosphere with large quantities of harmful industrial waste.

Holger TÖPPER
Torgelow, G.D.R.

The leaders of all countries, big and small, are faced with the choice of either acting sensibly and refraining from using the weapons of war or destroying all life on Earth. The call to end nuclear testing is extremely timely at present. And the Soviet Union is setting a good example in this respect.

Umberto CALLA
Pinerolo, Italy

I and my friends have been fighting against the United States' nuclear buildup, against SDI and against Japanese military buildup in cooperation with the U.S. We are preparing for a mass meeting demanding that the U.S. stop nuclear testing in response to the Soviet moratorium. We have not lost hope that by joining forces people of good will can force the militarists to abandon their insane schemes.

Masao WATANABE
Osaka, Japan

For more readers' comments on the Soviet initiative and for Alexander Bovin's commentary on the subject see p. 32.

NEW TIMES
A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

НОВОЕ ВРЕМЯ · TEMPS NOUVEAUX · NOWE CZASY · TIEMPOS NUEVOS
NEUE ZEIT · nová doba · TEMPI NUOVI · TEMPOS NOVOS

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE (1), PANORAMA (7), NOTES, REMARKS (16).

On September 1, observed as Day of Knowledge, millions of Soviet children went to school. A year of intensive study began for them, and their first lesson was devoted to the theme of peace.

TASS photo

An End to Nuclear Explosions

is what the overwhelming majority of governments and political and public leaders in all countries want, First Deputy Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R. Yuli Vorontsov stressed at a press conference in Moscow.

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The White House Is Opposed to a Test Ban

Without tests space strike weapons cannot be deployed, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, First Deputy Minister of Defence and Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet armed forces, told newsmen.

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The Likelihood of a Conflict

would be dramatically reduced by a ban on tests. Such a ban would strengthen mutual security, historian Alexander KALYADIN says. Academician Alexander BAYEV stresses that arms buildup is not only costly but also diverts talented people from work for the good of mankind.

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Are Not Too Many Concessions Being Made?

Anxiety on this score is voiced in letters to the editor from Soviet and foreign readers of New Times. The question is dealt with by world affairs writer Alexander BOVIN.

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Are the Americans Ready

to think in a new way? That prejudice and distrust are suicidal in the nuclear age was the unanimous opinion of the Soviet and American participants in a peace cruise on the Mississippi in which our special correspondent took part.

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THE HISTORIC CHANCE MUST NOT BE MISSED

In Moscow [see photo above] and dozens of other Soviet cities, there have been meetings and rallies in support of the August 18 statement by Mikhail Gorbachev on the extension of the nuclear test moratorium.

Photo by V. Panov

● **A DIPLOMAT'S VIEW**

First Deputy Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R.
YULI VORONTSOV

Halt the Nuclear Malaise

Mikhail Gorbachev's announcement that the Soviet Union is to extend its unilateral nuclear test moratorium is at the centre of international attention. The overwhelming majority of governments, politicians and public figures the world over are categorically advocating the immediate cessation of nuclear explosions. Only a stubborn influential minority in the U.S. want nuclear explosions to continue to shake the earth.

Washington is now very nervous. Contradictory arguments are being put forward concerning America's continued nuclear testing. White House chief of staff Donald Regan says that the U.S. would not be averse to a treaty for a complete, comprehensive nuclear weapon test ban, but it cannot accept such a treaty without a reliable control system. Other spokesmen for the U.S. President discard the control excuse altogether and bluntly assert that the U.S. needs the tests to develop more sophisticated nuclear weapons. Washington is likewise confused as to who is ahead of whom in nuclear armaments. Effectively, the U.S. can offer no plausible explanation for its refusal to join the Soviet moratorium; one is forced to conclude that it needs nuclear explosions simply to carry on with the

nuclear arms race in its attempt to obtain military superiority. Naturally, the matter is not at all one of control.

For the Soviet Union control is no problem. This is graphically illustrated by the joint experiment staged by U.S. and Soviet scientists in the Semipalatinsk area in the U.S.S.R. The Soviet government favoured the agreement to conduct this experiment and said it was prepared to contribute to its implementation. So far Washington has not expressed readiness for a parallel experiment in the U.S.A.

It is now obvious that Washington is motivated not by concern for control, but by efforts to cover up the continued development of new nuclear weapons, specifically to use the energy of nuclear explosions to implement the "star wars" programme.

The Soviet Union greatly appreciates the joint action taken by the heads of state and government of the Group of Six—Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania, to secure the earliest cessation of nuclear explosions. For our part, we have already said that we are prepared to accept their offer to help verify a nuclear test ban, including on-site inspection with the proviso, of course, that this is accepted by the U.S. We also view favourably the proposal to arrange a meeting between experts from these countries and their Soviet and U.S. counterparts, and this was stated by Mikhail Gorbachev in his reply to the heads of state and government of the six countries published on August 24.

We have no objection to talks being resumed with the participation of Britain. We have had such tripartite (the U.S.S.R., the U.S., and Britain) talks in the past, but they broke down through no fault of ours. We would welcome any moves from France in this field. Yet today it is the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. that should come up with concrete proposals for a test ban. However, we would welcome other countries subsequently joining both the moratorium and an agreement should it be concluded.

Today there is every grounds for definitively checking the nuclear malaise on earth through a Soviet-U.S. moratorium and a subsequent relevant agreement. After all, the moratorium should not be viewed as a step to end nuclear tests alone, but within the context of the overall problem of ridding humanity of nuclear weapons, as a prologue to full nuclear disarmament. The stopping of nuclear explosions might be one of the threads by which we could begin to unwind the entire tangle of the problem of nuclear disarmament. If there are no explosions, no new nuclear weapons will be devised, and serious limitations will be imposed on weapons that already exist. This would apply equally to the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

The West is suggesting an intermediate agreement envisaging a gradual reduction in the number of nuclear explosions. Proposals of this order are prompted by the desire to keep open a loophole for the arms race. Indeed, one might ask, why continue nuclear testing in a restricted form when such testing can be ended generally and immediately? The conditions for this exist. The U.S.S.R. is prepared to end tests completely and the Group of Six is advocating this.

It is to be hoped that eventually common sense will gain the upper hand in Washington and the historic chance of ending the arms race will not be missed. We repeat once again that an agreement with the U.S. to end nuclear testing, with fully reliable verification, including on-site inspection, is conceivable, and that it can be achieved in a short space of time. An agreement to this effect could be signed at the U.S.S.R.-U.S. summit, which in turn may well materialize if its productivity is ensured and the appropriate political atmosphere generated. Meanwhile, there is no agreement on a firm date for a new Gorbachev-Reagan meeting, contrary to statements that have appeared in some Western mass media. ■

● **A MILITARY MAN'S VIEW**

First Deputy Minister of Defence,
Chief of General Staff,
Marshal of the Soviet Union

SERGEI AKHROMEYEV

We Will Find the Proper Reply to SDI

Whitewashing the U.S. Administration's refusal to terminate nuclear explosions, some American representatives contend that since the U.S. is behind the U.S.S.R. in the modernization of nuclear weaponry it needs to stage tests. Washington also says that the U.S.S.R. can afford the moratorium because it is supposedly ahead of the U.S. in the number of tests conducted. These statements are inaccurate. The facts show that it is the U.S. that is in the lead in the number of nuclear tests held, accounting for more than half of all explosions detonated over the entire period worldwide. The U.S. is also in the lead in the number of tests in each medium, in the atmosphere, under ground and under water.

Consider the last two years. In 1984 the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. conducted an approximately equal number of nuclear tests. In 1985 the U.S.S.R. conducted nine tests, prior to its moratorium, while the U.S. staged 20. The U.S.S.R. has staged no nuclear tests for more than a year now, while the U.S. has conducted 18 since our moratorium came into effect. Of this number it reported 15. The other three, which it did not report, were of low capacity. One was held in August 1985, just after the Soviet-announced moratorium, the other two were conducted in the autumn of 1985 and in the spring of 1986. They were recorded by the national technical means available to the Soviet Union.

Hence, the issue is not one of a "lag," but rather that if nuclear testing is stopped, it will be impossible to develop national anti-missile defences or deploy space-based strike weaponry, at any rate on the large scale envisaged in the U.S. Furthermore, the Pentagon intends to modernize its nuclear potential completely. To this end new nuclear warheads are needed, and these must be tested. Some nuclear tests are conducted to ascertain the reliability of existing nuclear devices. However, they account for a very small proportion of tests.

Eighty per cent of tests, perhaps

even more, are carried out to develop new nuclear weaponry and energy sources for space-based arms.

When U.S. preparations for "star wars" are mentioned, what is meant are plans to employ a multi-tiered system for the anti-missile defence of U.S. territory and to devise and deploy space-based strike weapons. The aim of the U.S. is to make Soviet strategic nuclear forces worthless, disarm the U.S.S.R. and thus acquire the opportunity to threaten us continually with a massive nuclear-missile strike. The deployment of national ABM defences and space-based strike weaponry will upset the existing military equilibrium between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., generate strategic chaos instead of stability, and drastically increase the danger of nuclear war.

Should the U.S. continue to implement its plans for "star wars" the U.S.S.R. will be obliged to take appropriate measures in response. We will quickly find a suitable reply and, moreover, it will not be what the U.S. expects. It will be a reply that will make the "star wars" programme worthless. The U.S. has no monopoly on scientific and technological progress in the military field. The development of science and technology in this field has reached a level at which the perennial struggle between sword and shield, defensive and offensive weaponry, is decided in many, not just one, directions. The U.S.S.R. is capable of meeting U.S. action to subvert the balance by means of a national anti-missile defence system and space-based strike weaponry. However, strategic offensive weaponry may be improved in a manner that will make the SDI programme fabulously expensive and difficult to implement. There are other possibilities as well.

Of course, if the U.S. deploys SDI we will have to reply. Unfortunately, we shall require additional resources to do so. But why waste resources and manpower devising newer and newer kinds of weaponry? That is another reason, prompted by economic considerations, why we want to end the arms race and are opposed to the development of space-based strike systems.

However, in the present situation the U.S.S.R. is obliged to conduct research in many fields. In some of these we can confidently envisage effective measures to counteract the U.S. SDI programme. They could be promptly implemented should the U.S. deploy a national ABM system and space-based strike weaponry. The U.S.S.R. will choose modes of operation that best accord with its defence interests and will in turn confront the U.S. with the need to find a reply.

But if nuclear testing is stopped, the further development of strategic armaments will also be halted. It will then be well-nigh impossible to deploy either space-based strike weaponry or national anti-missile defences. The U.S.S.R. has a stake in this. In announcing the extension of its moratorium, it hopes that peace-loving states and the world community will support it. The decision to extend the moratorium for the fourth time had to be weighed carefully. It was vital to have an accurate estimation of the balance of forces. Still, we placed ourselves at a definite disadvantage, believing it to be acceptable for the time being. Our own defence capacity and that of our friends is being maintained at proper levels. ■

● **A SCHOLAR'S VIEW**

Member of the standing committee on disarmament of the World Federation of Scientific Workers

ALEXANDER KALYADIN, D. Sc. (Hist.)

To Think and Act in a New Way

Today the issue of the complete and universal cessation of nuclear weapon tests is exceptionally acute. On the one hand, these tests feed the nuclear arms race, which is about to escalate to a still more dangerous level, on the other, new political, scientific and technological options have emerged that make a test ban completely verifiable. And here one must first note the unilateral moratorium which the U.S.S.R. recently extended for the fourth time plus the other constructive Soviet initiatives and programmes, demonstrating the effectiveness of the new mode of political thinking. The world community as a whole and prominent politicians and statesmen in many countries are more and more resolutely exhorting other nuclear powers, especially the U.S., to emulate the Soviet example, stop tests, and sign an agreement definitively outlawing them.

The advocacy of scientists for a ban on nuclear explosions is also significant. Recently scientists from various disciplines, who are analyzing problems associated with a test ban, have come together in several countries. Such prestigious international associations as the Pugwash movement, the World Federation of Scientific Workers, and the recently created international initiative group are helping them to pool efforts.

Cartoon by N. Shcherbakov

Global Hazards

Two representative conferences, the international forum of scientists on nuclear test ban and the international "Science, Technology and Peace" forum, both held in Moscow not long ago, have discussed the major results obtained from a comprehensive investigation of problems related to a nuclear test ban. The Soviet moratorium, as Mikhail Gorbachev noted, has encouraged the participants, though they are of different political persuasions and have different approaches to the specific ways and means of ending nuclear testing, to vigorous action. After all, scientists are more fully aware than other people of the dangers of the atom. The conclusions and assessments at which they have arrived through an unbiassed comprehensive analysis of all relevant aspects are of heightened interest.

One crucial conclusion is that the tests lead to the escalation of the arms race to a dangerously new and higher level, by which is meant the development of weapon systems and types with an increasingly diverse overkill, including some that can be used in space. The armed forces buildup will inevitably entail the development of a first-strike potential. There will be more nuclear munitions with a multiplied overkill. We can expect third-generation nuclear weaponry with selectively amplified factors. All this will upset the strategic equilibrium, thus entailing unpredictable consequences.

Regional stability and safety will suffer, inasmuch as continuing to test will exacerbate nuclear proliferation and give those who want nuclear weapons in the so-called "near-nuclear states" a freer hand.

Nuclear testing is likewise fraught with global hazards of another type. Ecologists are of the view that the earth we live on has reached a point where nuclear explosions must be outlawed immediately.

Japanese medical research has revealed that the radioactive contamination of the Pacific's surface by nuclear tests is correlated with the increasing incidence of a whole range of illnesses. Moreover, scientists have observed the genetic effects of nuclear detonations. Hence it is vital to stop the tests at once for the sake not only of the present but of successive generations. Otherwise humanity will face unforseeable consequences deriving from modifications in the biosphere's genetic stock.

What a Test Ban Would Bring

First, it would result in greater strategic stability. After all, it is extremely difficult to boost buildup of the nuclear weapons and their modernization without tests. There would be far fewer opportunities for developing new strategic, operational, tactical, and medium-range nuclear weapon types and systems, as well as warheads for some carrier vehicles, such as cruise missiles, which constitute a destabilizing factor in that they are difficult to verify.

An end to testing would also be of paramount significance in restraining the augmentation of stocks of offensive nuclear armaments. Experts maintain that this would drastically minimize the likelihood of nuclear conflict, which would also serve to consolidate reciprocal security.

An end to testing would stonewall programmes for developing space-based strike weaponry, of which the X-ray laser, powered by nuclear detonation, is a possible crucial component.

Finally, comprehensive nuclear weapon test ban subject to appropriate international control procedures would serve to consolidate international confidence and ameliorate the world political situation. In fact, the related control machinery could prove of great benefit for promoting other aspects of disarmament.

Verification Is No Problem

For years the thesis that a moratorium is not effectively verifiable has been trotted out as the basic argument against an agreement for the general and complete prohibition of nuclear weapon testing. Seismologists, physicists and mathematicians equally declare that the technical aspects of control are no obstacle to the immediate cessation of nuclear explosions and the conclusion of the appropriate international treaty. On the contrary, the latest scientific data demonstrate that achievements in seismology and other disciplines and the higher level of international scientific cooperation in the area of verification afford far greater possibilities today for detecting and identifying explosions.

Major progress has been reached in the field of national seismic control measures. Thus, whereas in the 1970s only one-kiloton explosions could be recorded by the means then available for identifying seismic phenomena, today explosions of under 0.1 kilotons can already be detected. In fact, a seismological station can identify 20-30-ton underground explosions even from a distance of 2,000-3,000 kilometres. With several stations working to this end the potential for detection will be correspondingly greater.

Soviet seismologists say they can hear a one-kiloton explosion from 10,000 kilometres away. This is illustrated by the registration within the Soviet Union of a Nevada nuclear detonation. By means of the national seismological control stations within its boundaries the Soviet Union has been able, over a lengthy period of observation, to pinpoint and identify nuclear explosions of about one kiloton. On the other hand U.S. seismologists claim that by employing similar control measures, the U.S. has not missed a single Soviet explosion of one kiloton or more over the past 20 years. It was held until lately that nuclear explosions could nevertheless be concealed through decoupling, which means the jamming of seismic signals by explosions within spherical subterranean cavities. However, calculations have convincingly demonstrated that the seismological control stations we have today are in a position to register nuclear detonations of this nature, even of low capacity. To all practical intents, it is impossible to conceal the creation of the necessary subterranean cavities, given other control measures such as observation from artificial earth satellites. After all, to decouple completely an 8-kiloton explosion it would be necessary to extract as much rock as it took to build the Pyramid of Cheops.

International scientific cooperation is a highly effective method of broadening possibilities and improving seismological control techniques. With this end in view and in line with the corresponding agreement between the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences and the U.S. Natural Resources Defence Council, a joint Soviet-American experiment is being conducted and some initial results have already been obtained.

Likewise of great significance is the multilateral cooperation within the framework of the Geneva Disarmament Conference of seismologists mounting technological experiments of an international character. The latest such experiment in 1984 involved 72 stations in 32 countries, including the U.S.S.R. These experiments have shown that the procedures which have been evolved are most effective. Currently in the preparatory stage is one more experiment in which the U.S.S.R. is also involved, which will be carried out to lay the groundwork for an international system of seismological control over a nuclear test ban. This is one more major vehicle for cooperation and confidence, making for the successful application of science's latest achievements in the interests of peace.

Seismological control is by no means the only means of verification. Other methods that could be employed include hydroacoustic techniques on the high seas and satellites for the observation of the Earth's surface.

Consequently it may be stated that the present record of achievement in science in conjunction with cooperation between scientists in different countries have given substantial support to the conviction that control is not a stumbling block in prohibiting nuclear explosions in every medium.

The fundamental problem is political, not technological. This only amplifies the role and responsibility borne by all social forces, including scientists and their organizations. It behoves them to bring to the attention of governments and the public at large the available scientific data, their assessments of the pernicious consequences of continued nuclear testing, and the possibilities that now exist for ending these tests.

■

THE STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE

Before the Finale

● OUR COMMENT

The flags of 33 European countries plus those of the U.S. and Canada are again flying from the building of Kulturhuset where the concluding session of the first stage of the Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe opened on August 19.

Most of the delegates arrived in the Swedish capital in advance for preliminary consultations with colleagues from other countries. The time factor was important, for it had been decided earlier to complete the Stockholm stage of the conference not later than September 19, 1986, and there are still quite a good many unsettled questions to take up.

Recent events have given a new impulse to the Stockholm conference and opened tangible prospects for the achievement of positive results. Top news in Stockholm these days was Mikhail Gorbachev's Moscow television speech. Many at the conference regard the decision to prolong the unilateral moratorium on all nuclear testing as a significant gesture of good will that should contribute also to the success of the Stockholm negotiations on lowering the level of military confrontation in Europe.

The socialist countries represented at the Stockholm forum are cooperating constructively with the other participants. Much has already been done to resolve such key issues as non-use of force, advance notification of military exercises and movements of troops, exchange of annual plans of military activity, invitation of observers and verification of the implementation of agreements. The socialist countries have submitted important proposals at literally every session in the past year. The fact that the question of prior notification of air force manoeuvres was finally settled in the closing days of the previous session is seen by many observers as a significant breakthrough achieved thanks to the political will and realism displayed by all who took part in the negotiations.

A common approach is evident also in a number of other spheres, including the matter of prior notification of exercises of land forces involving the aircraft, the navy and amphibian and airborne troops. There is a marked improvement in the general atmosphere at the conference.

However, much still has to be done to bring the diverse positions closer together and resolve the differences. The discussions have shown that various aspects of verification remain a major obstacle to the elaboration of mutually acceptable agreement. The socialist countries attach prime importance to this problem. They are no less interested than their Western partners in a reliable and effective verification of the observance of agreements.

On the very first day of the deliberations of the present session the Soviet Union and the other socialist states declared their readiness to agree to on-the-spot verification on the basis of a limited quota—one or two inspections a year on the territory of each country. This new initiative evoked a positive response at the conference. Ambassador Klaus J. Ciron, who heads the F.R.G. delegation, called it a "good step." According to the press, however, Washington dismissed the Soviet initiative as another "propaganda trick."

The U.S. and some of its NATO allies have adopted an obstructionist stance in Stockholm also on the question of the admissible levels of military exercises, their number and duration. An instance of such exercises was the large-scale NATO Autumn Forge manoeuvres, the beginning of which coincided with the opening of the present session of the Stockholm conference. Taking part in these exercises held on the territory of Denmark, which is practically next door to Stockholm, were up to 200,000 servicemen of NATO countries, combat planes, naval vessels and other weaponry.

Yet positive decisions on military manoeuvres could have a stabilizing effect on the military-political situation in Europe, inasmuch as they would reduce the likelihood of incorrect evaluations of the actions of the other side and thereby lessen the risk of war breaking out as a result of an error or faulty means of notification and communication. Such an agreement would be of inestimable value also because in the present-day conditions large-scale military exercises are sometimes difficult to distinguish from preparations for attack.

The Western powers, in their striving to reserve for themselves the right of uncontrolled buildup of military activity on the European continent, have yet to submit any concrete proposals on this question at the conference, although it is obvious that the adoption of a substantive final document in Stockholm is hardly possible unless agreement on limiting military activity is reached.

The Stockholm conference is called upon to concretize and give effect to the principle of the non-use of force. In the present explosive situation it is more than ever imperative to make the observance of international commitments on the non-use of force or the threat of force more effective and operative. The relevant document must not be a simple repetition of the United Nations Charter or the Helsinki Final Act. What must be done is to link the principle of the non-use of force with concrete measures to build confidence in the military sphere.

Success here could be the lever that would set in motion a whole chain of negotiations on urgent international issues. The achievement of mutually acceptable decisions on confidence building would be virtually the first agreement on military questions reached with the participation of the American side in the past seven years.

V. BOGACHOV
and N. VUKOLOV
TASS correspondents,
exclusive for New Times
Stockholm

U.S.A.—SOUTH AFRICA

The Same Root

● AN OBSERVER'S VIEW

The Washington Diogeneses are lighting their lamps. A man must be found at short notice, with this month as the deadline, to take office as U.S. ambassador to Pretoria.

The main thing is that he should not steal—a tall order in Washington's corridors of power. And it would be even better if he were dark-skinned—also rare at the State Department. The idea is that a black would more easily win the sympathies of African blacks and induce them to believe in Uncle Sam's selfless humanitarianism. U.S. officialdom is longing to do good. It is a do-gooder that is sickened when anyone anywhere is oppressed.

God appeals to the White House and the White House to Pieter Botha: all men are created equal. Apartheid is morally wrong and politically unacceptable. The U.S. cannot maintain cordial rela-

tions with a government whose power rests upon the denial of rights to a majority of its people, based upon race.... Hence apartheid must be dismantled.

For years on end Washington turned a blind eye to the brutalities and atrocities perpetrated in South Africa. Why has it now suddenly opposed racial segregation?

Business can dispense with ethics, politics cannot. Elections to Congress are in the offing. A publicly declared love for their dark-skinned brethren shines like a decoration for martial gallantry on the lapels of many public servants, deeply concerned for the rights of man. Hence the hasty stocktaking of ethical principles.

Meanwhile the news media are crammed with dispatches from South Africa reporting assembly-line torture and massacre, the jailing of some 12,000 to 17,000 people, economic blackmail, pressure and armed action against Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Lesotho and Botswana. Yet the U.S. Administration is offering the racists one more chance, again waving an admonitory finger at Pieter Botha telling him not to expect the U.S. "to hold out much longer." Newspapers are announcing likely sanctions, the most frightening being restrictions on landing rights in the U.S. for South Africa's aircraft and on entry visas for its representatives.

What, a trade embargo? You must be crazy, Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, quivers. The consequences, the White House warns, would be terrible. Black miners would find themselves without jobs. Their families would have nothing to eat, and eke out a miserable, poverty-stricken existence. The Washington Tartuffes take the Gospel teachings seriously, especially where giving drink to the thirsty and food to the hungry is concerned. South Africa is like a zebra's hide: if you strike at a white stripe, a black one will also feel the pain.

The West, cries London, rushing to the rescue, has invested scores of billions in South Africa. Why, it provides $14 billion worth of commodities and services to South Africa annually. Sanctions would be "immoral" and "utterly repugnant," Downing Street enunciates in response to criticism from the "frontline" states at their Luanda conference and from members of the Commonwealth, ever bearing in mind the value of the diamonds, chromium, manganese, uranium, gold and platinum that South Africa exports.

Almost one in every five U.S. Senators has money invested in South Africa, AP reports, divulging a dark secret. No wonder the Senate's recent sanctions bill is so toothless compared with the House bill. Both will now go to the House-Senate conference committee to have their last fangs pulled out.

If the Washington Diogeneses are lucky, they will find the man they need and provide the new ambassador with a Statue-of-Liberty torch to shine in South Africa over "the huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Yet neither the glow nor the curly hair and dark skin will serve to camouflage the duplicity, cruelty and greed of the West's white rulers. They will fail to hide the fact that their "humane" democracies spring from the same roots of national and social oppression.

L. MAKAREVICH

Cartoon from the Asahi Evening News (Japan)

THE MIDDLE EAST

Whence the "Sea Wind"

● REFLECTIONS ON AN EVENT

The storm clouds gathering over the Mediterranean have no connection with autumn gales, even though the Western press already has reports of a Sea Wind. That is simply the code name for the naval exercises which the U.S. 6th Fleet initiated on August 24 off Libya's coast and in which Egyptian warships and planes are also taking part. Officially, these are U.S.-Egyptian war games—like last year's Bright Star exercises which provoked a tide of protest in the Arab world. But whereas last year's militaristic games were conducted on Egyptian territory, the current exercises have shifted to international waters, where the U.S. aircraft carrier Forrestal and its convoy, along with deck aircraft and U.S. Marines, hold sway.

When the Forrestal with its convoy weighed anchor from Cannes in France for the current naval manoeuvres, newsmen asked U.S. officials to explain whence Sea Wind blows today. They were told that these were "secret" exercises and that no information would be forthcoming. However, subsequently, on August 24, when the war games began, a Pentagon spokesman, evidently taking into account the adverse reaction to this "secrecy," clarified that the war games had been planned and are not preparations for a new military action against Libya.

What the Pentagon spokesman said could be taken as indirectly revealing Washington's real designs, had they not been seen through already by the public and press throughout the world. Voicing anxiety over the increased activity of U.S. armed forces in the Mediterranean, the Lebanese newspaper An-Nida indicated the direct and consistent link between Sea Wind and Washington's anti-Libyan aggression of last spring. It mentioned a whole series of U.S. anti-Libyan actions following the April assault by the U.S. Air Force and 6th Fleet, and the menacing pronouncements of White House VIPs. "Washington, which has in the words of Vice-President George Bush, reaffirmed its animosity towards Arab rights, is now flexing its muscles in the Mediterranean," the newspaper says. "The U.S. is blackmailing and intimidating states that obstruct efforts to foist capitulatory projects on the Arabs."

The "planned" and "secret" U.S.-Egyptian war games have coincided with the stepped-up efforts of Washington and Tel Aviv to coerce some Arab countries into entering into separate talks with Israel, and

thus bring an American-style peace, in the manner of the unfortunate Camp David agreements, to the Middle East. Libya, like Syria, is vehemently opposed to the U.S.-Israeli plans.

Surely, there is a bluntly menacing tone in the Pentagon's spokesman's announcement that the current manoeuvres may swell up into a conflict should Libya try to attack forces engaged in the exercises. He went on to say that reconnaissance and radioelectronic jamming aircraft would keep constant watch on Libyan air bases and anti-aircraft missile positions. This "warning" is reminiscent of the statements Pentagon officials issued last spring before bombing Libya. Is Washington hatching another bloody provocation?

It stands to reason that the people of Libya will not knuckle under this time either. Only recently Syrian President Hafez Assad came to Tripoli to discuss a whole spectrum of topical Middle East problems with the Libyan leadership. This visit is a further demonstration of the solidarity felt by forces in the region that oppose U.S.-Israeli designs on the Middle East. At the same time they are attempting to turn the Mediterranean into a region of lasting peace and security and banish once and for all the threat of war against the peoples in the region.

"The concentration of military might and the provocatory manoeuvres in the neighbourhood of the littoral states, which pose a threat to the independence and sovereignty of all the countries in the area," An-Nida stresses, "only serve to heighten our appreciation of the significance of the Soviet proposals to make the Mediterranean a zone of peace. The constructive Soviet initiative takes into account the interests of the Mediterranean peoples and states. Its implementation would do away with the fuse that can set off a major explosion at any moment through the fault of the forces of aggression.

Both those who are playing with fire and their voluntary or involuntary partners should bear in mind the hazards of such an explosion. They should also realize the dangerous direction in which Sea Wind is blowing.

E. KORSHUNOV

INDO-CHINA

The Firm Resolve

INITIATIVES

The foreign ministers of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea at their 13th conference held last month in Hanoi once again declared their readiness to do everything possible to help improve the situation in Southeast Asia and demonstrated their firm resolve to work towards turning this part of the Asian and Pacific region into a zone of peace, good-neighbourship and co-operation. They highly appraised the peace efforts of the Soviet Union and particularly the far-reaching programme of international security and peaceful cooperation in the area advanced by Mikhail Gorbachev in Vladivostok.

A stumbling block to securing a healthier climate in Southeast Asia continues to be the so-called "Kampuchean question" artificially created by imperialist circles. Given the removal of the criminal Pol Pot clique and the withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteers from Kampuchea this "question" could be removed from the agenda altogether, it was pointed out in Hanoi. Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea have expressed their readiness to start simultaneous discussion of these problems.

People's Kampuchea is successfully building a new life, its viability leaves no room for doubt and it is confident of its strength. That is why it is ready to agree to the participation in the settlement of internal Kampuchean problems of the opposing Khmer elements and groups on condition that they sever all relations with the Pol Pot clique. In this connection the Hanoi conference paid due tribute to the proposal made by Australian Foreign Minister Hayden that a tribunal be set up to investigate the atrocities perpetrated by that clique.

As for the Vietnamese volunteers in Kampuchea, their step-by-step withdrawal has already begun and will be completed by the year 1990, as was announced earlier.

Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea cherish their long friendship with China and expressed the desire to restore and develop that friendship. The normalization of their countries' relations with China, the foreign ministers stressed, would contribute substantially to improving the situation in Southeast Asia.

The three Indo-Chinese states reiterated their desire to normalize relations with neighbouring Thailand. Vietnam proposed holding talks aimed at settling outstanding problems. Laos, too, intends to do everything it can towards mutual understanding and confidence in its relations with its western neighbour. In its turn, Kampuchea proposed setting up on both sides of the Kampuchean-Thai frontier a zone of peace to be occupied exclusively by Kampuchean and Thai forces.

Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea supported Indonesia's proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in Southeast Asia and reaffirmed their readiness to cooperate with the ASEAN countries in the matter of making this region a zone of peace and stability.

A prominent place in the Hanoi talks was occupied by questions relating to the non-aligned movement, and primarily to the eighth conference of the heads of state and government of the non-aligned countries in Harare. Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea are prepared to join other non-aligned states in exerting maximum effort to guarantee the success of this conference and contribute to the resolving of the urgent issues facing mankind today.

Concerned for the unity of the non-aligned movement and seeking to ensure that its attention is concentrated on the most urgent issues and not distracted by discussions that could undermine the solidarity within the movement, people's Kampuchea expressed the wish that Kampuchea's seat in that movement be left vacant. At the same time the three Indo-Chinese countries resolutely opposed any attempt to smuggle into the Harare forum representatives of the notorious "coalition government of democratic Kampuchea" or to get the conference to discuss the "Kampuchean question," a move that could only serve to torpedo the Harare conference and jeopardize its outcome.

Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea once again demonstrated their sincere desire to settle all the outstanding problems in Southeast Asia by peaceful means. These efforts are supported by the U.S.S.R. and other countries of the socialist community, by all peace forces.

Y. KUZMICHOV

JAPAN

Nuclear Visitors

ON-THE-SPOT REPORT

August in Japan is the month of veneration of the dead. In August people bow their heads in tribute to the memory of the 350,000 inhabitants of Hiroshima and Nagasaki whose death shocked all mankind.

On August 6 the traditional appeal was sounded in Hiroshima. Time is running out. All nuclear tests must be ended immediately once and for all. The United States and the Soviet Union, the message says, must meet at the highest level and take practical steps towards nuclear disarmament. The mayor of Hiroshima proposed holding the second part of the summit in Nagasaki which must be the last city on earth to experience a nuclear holocaust.

"Nuclear allergy" is the term used in Japan to describe the range of emotions associated with the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is compounded of revulsion for nuclear war and its weapons, the resolve not to allow a repetition of the tragedy on a global scale. And the hope that good will and peace prevail and halt the death conveyer. This is an allergy every human being must "suffer" from. But how strong is the resistance to it, how tenacious the acquired immunity!

Hiroshima joined the several hundred prefectures, towns and villages that adopted the anti-nuclear declaration only this year and Nagasaki is not even planning to do so, at any rate not in the foreseeable future, I learned at the city council. At the very time when the eternal flame at the graves of the victims of the atomic bombing was burning particularly brightly, secretary-general of the Japanese cabinet Mosaharu Gotoda announced that the final decision would shortly be taken on Japan's joining in the research on SDI, since the parliamentary resolution banning the military use of outer space did not, he said, conflict with participation in the "star wars" programme. A government White Paper on defence has been published discussing the possibility of extending the five-year military buildup programme. It is believed in Tokyo that military expenditure in the next fiscal year will exceed the ceiling of 1 per cent of the gross national product set in 1976. Thus, the last restraints on turning Japan into a major military power are about to be removed.

The city of Iwakuni is only 40 kilometres from Hiroshima. Both cities are symbols. What Hiroshima stands for we know. The symbolism of Iwakuni is revealed when one looks out of the window of the city council to see American war planes taking off from the runway that stretches along the sea coast.

"That American base is the cause of many of our city's problems," Mitsuo Saito, member of the city council, and Hiroshi Makita, vice-chairman of the trade union of administrative employees, told me. "Apart from the dangerous proximity of the aircraft to densely populated districts, we have been forbidden to build high-rise buildings, industrial firms are moving away and the population is dwindling. The Marines also have an air base here, work has begun on lengthening the runway, and new hangars and storehouses are being built. The Americans refuse to say whether there are any nuclear weapons in Iwakuni, but most of the townsfolk have no doubts on that score. Nevertheless, the protest movement here is weak. This is a traditionally conservative-minded area. People hope that there won't be a nuclear war and that Iwakuni will never share the fate of Hiroshima."

Your correspondent heard something of the same in the town of Sasebo which is situated 90 kilometres north of Nagasaki. The Japanese

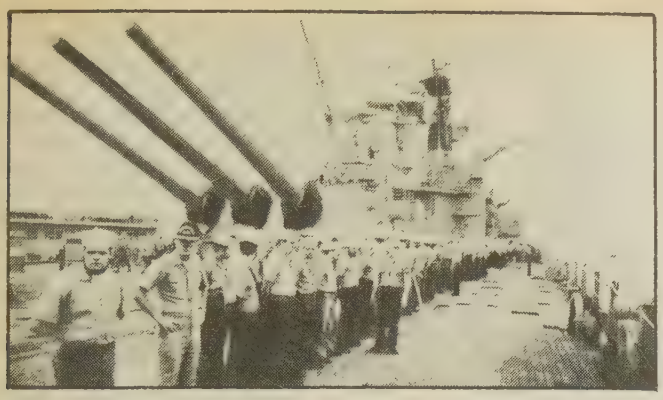
NEW CALEDONIA

In mid-August the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front which expresses the aspirations of the indigenous population of New Caledonia [a French overseas territory in the Pacific] held its fourth congress. It discussed the strategy of the organization following the advent to power in France of a government of the right, which had put a bill through parliament providing for the tightening of French control over New Caledonia and restricting the authority of the local self-government bodies elected last year. The congress adopted a resolution sharply condemning the colonial policy of the new French cabinet.

At the beginning of August the 13 countries of the South Pacific Forum applied to the U.N. Special Committee on Decolonization asking that New Caledonia be included in the list of non-self-governing territories which should be granted independence.

French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac is scheduled to visit New Caledonia at the end of August.

Kanaks demanding independence.
Photo from Der Spiegel (F.R.G.)



The missile-carrying battleship New Jersey. The military refused to say whether she had nuclear weapons on board.

Photo from Der Spiegel (F.R.G.)

press writes about the nuclear weapon depots there, the concentration of ships of the 7th Fleet and the expansion of the base. Sasebo is clearly being turned into an important strongpoint for the U.S. naval forces in the Pacific. Nuclear submarines and landing craft are permanently based here. And the Americans are reported to have similar plans for the New Jersey.

As if in confirmation of this an American squadron headed by the New Jersey entered the port of Sasebo on August 24. The Japanese press notes that this is the first time so many ships carrying nuclear weapons—Tomahawk cruise missiles—have appeared off the coast of Japan. I found the reaction of a Japanese colleague of mine to this somewhat curious.

"Sasebo has always been a naval base, first of the Japanese imperial navy and later, the U.S. Navy," Yoichi Momota, local correspondent of the Asahi, observed. "The well-being of thousands of dockers, shipbuilders and merchants depends on it. And these are hard times. The shipbuilding industry is in crisis and unemployment is growing."

It is a great pity that today, 41 years after the first nuclear bombing, there still are a good many people who prefer not to think of the possibility that all these Tomahawks, warships, bomber aircraft, and nuclear submarines might be put to direct use.

Nevertheless, those who experienced Hiroshima and Nagasaki do not want to be reconciled to the nuclear danger. The entry of the U.S. naval squadron into Sasebo evoked a wave of mass protest.

The first person from Hiroshima I met this year was Kenji Hirayoshi, chief of the local fire brigade. I well remember what he said:

"We have learned to put out some powerful fires. Our colleagues at Chernobyl averted catastrophe at the power station. But no fire or accident can be compared to a nuclear war. Nothing will be able to put that out. It can only be prevented.

Y. TAVROVSKY
our own correspondent
Hiroshima-Iwakuni-Sasebo—Nagasaki—Tokyo

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The Common Demand

● **COMMENTARY**

The news of the fourth prolongation by the Soviet Union of its moratorium on nuclear testing found the delegations of the Peace committees of Mongolia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea in Yakutsk, the capital of the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. It was the fifth day of their tour of Siberia and the Soviet Far East where an International Year of Peace meet was held to discuss the urgent problems of safeguarding peace and security in the Asian and Pacific region. The participants in the meet sent a telegram to General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev hailing the new peace initiative of the Soviet Union, and a message to President Reagan urging the U.S. government to heed the voice of reason and the call sounded the world over to join the Soviet moratorium.

In the course of the tour which began in Tynda and ended in Khabarovsk the delegations met with the working people, the builders and operators of the Baikal-Amur Railway, and the inhabitants of the new settlements that have sprung up on the BAM line.

Foreign visitors were lavish with praise of the results of the peaceful labours of the pioneers who had built modern towns in this grim land of permafrost and dense forests.

To rid mankind of the nuclear threat, to ensure a peaceful life for the working folk and the peoples of the entire Asian and Pacific region, and help build a reliable system of security—such was the leitmotif of the speeches delivered by Soviet people and members of the peace delegations from fraternal countries at meetings in Tynda, Neryungri, Yakutsk and Khabarovsk.

The visitors' tour of the Siberia and the Far East ended with the holding of a conference in Khabarovsk on problems relating to the safeguarding of peace and security in the Asian and Pacific region. Vikenty Matveyev, vice-chairman of the Soviet Peace Committee and leader of the Soviet delegation who addressed the conference, gave a high appraisal of the role of the peace movement in rallying the public of the countries of the region to fight for the strengthening of security. The foreign participants in the conference were unanimous as regards the way to strengthen mutual understanding and security. They stressed the role played by the socialist countries which repeatedly advanced concrete peace initiatives.

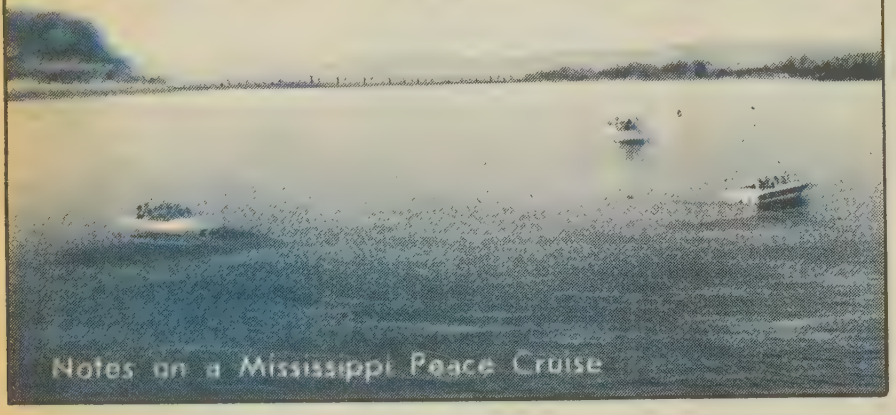
Vice-chairman of the All-Korean National Peace Committee Yu Hae Yong drew attention to the explosive situation on the Korean peninsula caused by the militaristic policy of the United States, which is turning South Korea into a nuclear springboard. He said that the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had come forward with a new peace initiative aimed at making the Korean peninsula a non-nuclear zone of peace.

The vice-chairman of the Mongolian Peace Committee C. Dolgor spoke of the proposal made by the government of the Mongolian People's Republic to sign a convention of non-aggression and non-use of force in relations between the Asian and Pacific states. It is time for a constructive dialogue between the Asian and Pacific countries on settling regional issues on the basis of respect for the independence and sovereignty of the peoples, and ruling out confrontation, Pham Van Truong, member of the Presidium of the Vietnam Committee for the Defence of World Peace, said.

The meeting adopted an Appeal to the people of the Asian and Pacific countries to step up their efforts and cooperate with one another in the name of a peaceful future of the region and the whole world.

A. KHODAREVA

Seven Hundred Miles in Search of "New America"



From our special correspondent
GALINA SIDOROVA

In evening dress the citizens of St. Paul saluted their acquaintances as they entered the hall. The tickets to the concert were expensive and difficult to get as it was an event in local cultural life. A lady sitting in the next row, eager to show how well informed she was, whispered in her friend's ear: "They say the composer and conductor is a Greek Marxist!"

Three hours later the entire audience was in raptures. Prosperous Americans enthusiastically applauded Mikis Theodorakis, who had flown to St. Paul specially to conduct Canto General, his setting for Pablo Neruda's poetry, the Swedish conductor Stefan Sköld (the performance was dedicated to the memory of Olof Palme who helped stage Theodorakis's Canto General in Minnesota), performers from Greece and the U.S., and the American poet Robert Bly (the translator of Pablo Neruda's poetry). And Robert Bly had barely announced the presence of the guests of honour—participants in the first Soviet-U.S. Mississippi Peace Cruise to begin on the following day—when the audience again burst into applause.

When our international "team" finally got to the hotel at nearly midnight, we were still deeply impressed by the evening's events. What was happening to America? As I looked through the booklet on the preparations for the concert, the article "Diversity and Oneness" attracted my attention. It read in part: "Human beings and societies are indeed diverse, as is the earth itself. And we must seek to comprehend this diversity. From diversity comes interdependence; and from interdependence, the moral imperative of cooperation.... What is it that keeps us, so often, from working together? There is, it would appear, some perverse streak in the psyche of many of us... that causes us to see humans and societies who differ from us as 'alien.' And from 'alien' it is but a short leap to 'hostile.' But one thing seems certain in the nuclear age. The mistrustful mode of perception is not only dangerous, but potentially suicidal. It leads to conflict and carries the seeds of global destruction."

The appeal for new thinking, the impressions of the concert, the symbol of the cruise (an American artist had given the boat the bow of the Soviet Alexander Pushkin and the stern of the U.S. Delta Queen) and the motto "All in One Boat in the Nuclear Age" summed up the crucial issue: were the Americans of the Heartland—i.e., the states we were to pass through—ready to show a new approach to the world they lived in and to themselves in this world? Were they prepared to accept the idea of interdependence?

I asked a man who knew his fellow countrymen better than anybody else to help me find the answer to this question, namely Mark Twain, or rather his present-day "double"—Bill McLinn, the U.S.A.'s foremost impersonator of Mark Twain and popularizer of his work. Bill is a one-man theatre company. In the past he studied international relations and political science at Berkeley University. Perhaps this is why his Mark Twain is seen as our contemporary, as a writer and thinker who can grasp the problems of contemporary America, especially those of war and peace, and make Americans take a detached view of themselves.

"As in the past," Bill says, "Mark Twain is showing my fellow citizens how little they have changed in the last 100 years from the historical and cultural points of view. We are just as self-confident, egocentric and condescending, we love to lecture others and hate to listen to anybody. It is worth noting that Mark Twain advised us how to overcome some of our 'complexes.' In his 'Innocents Abroad' he wrote that meeting people of other nations was instructive for Americans. Because such meetings helped them realize the fact that there were other people besides themselves and other views worthy of equal respect and attention. Most of the Americans taking part in this cruise have realized the need to take a broader view of the world, to understand the problem that has united everybody and above all our two peoples—that of preserving life on Earth. The cruise is also important because we have yet to persuade many of my fellow countrymen of this. And not only those living on both banks of the Mississippi."

All Hands on Deck

So on July 26 we embarked on a cruise down the river that provides the background for the work of Samuel Clemens, better known to the world as Mark Twain, to travel along a route the ancestors of the present inhabitants of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri pioneered in the last century, as they moved southwestwards in search of new lands and luck. We were to sail downstream from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Saint Louis, Missouri. History is reflected in the names of the towns at which the boat stops: La Crosse is an old Indian ball game, Praire du Chien—a former Indian settlement where Americans of French extraction opened a fur trading station. Norwegians and Germans by birth floated timber down the Mississippi and then settled on its banks.

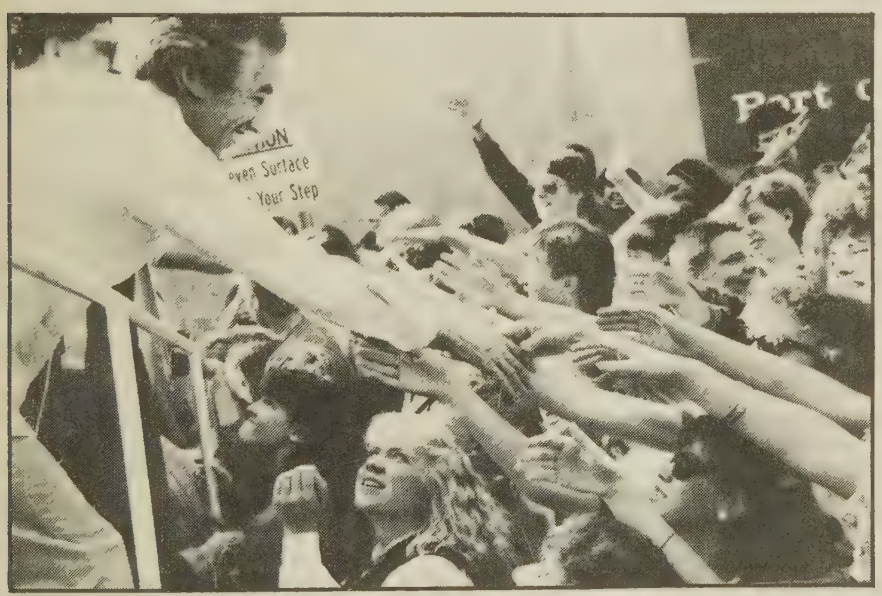
The age when 11,000 paddleboats sailed up and down the great river overtaking and saluting one another has long passed. The Delta Queen—the last of the Mohicans—has been entered in the national historical items register and has been made available to tourists. This time the boat was carrying out an unusual mission—a peace cruise with 46 Soviet citizens and 130 Americans aboard.

It was with dignity that the sixty-year-old Queen swung clear of the pier to the traditional music played by an organ on the upper deck. We sailed to enthusiastic cries of kids in "Ya lyublyu russki yazyk" sports shirts, good wishes from hundreds of adults from St. Paul,

and yells of a small group of ultra-rights, drowned in the atmosphere of universal exultation.

It seemed at that moment as if Howard and Alice Frazier, co-directors of Promoting Enduring Peace, were the happiest people in the world. For four years running they have organized American Peace Cruises on the Volga. Over the last two years they have been doing their utmost to realize their cherished dream: to welcome their Soviet friends on the banks of the Mississippi. In the past Alice worked in a school and she has now retired. Until 1972 Howard was a government official, working under every administration from Franklin D. Roosevelt's on. Why have Mr and Mrs Frazier, their children and even their grandchildren spared neither time nor effort to promote contacts between Soviet and American citizens?

"Why?" Howard asked in surprise. "The most important thing today is to get as many Americans as possible to realize that, though we may differ, we have one goal in common—peace. And



The first bridge of trust.

it will be possible to achieve this goal only if we get together, overcoming mutual fear and mistrust. I want my fellow countrymen to open their eyes, to see that the Russians are people just like us and that we can and should be friends with them."

The eight-day cruise revealed to us that many people in the Heartland sincerely wanted to "open their eyes." The mayors of all the towns at which the Delta Queen stopped declared that day a Day of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union.

But another event staggered us even more.

In the middle of the first night we were suddenly roused from deep sleep by a cry: "All hands on deck!" Failing to understand what was happening we emerged obediently from our cabins. The Queen was in one of the many locks of the Mississippi. On the bank a crowd had come out to greet us with placards in Russian: "Welcome, Soviet friends!", "Peace, friendship." Parents had brought their children, who normally should have been in bed by then. While the boat is in a lock it is forbidden to go ashore. Therefore we engaged in conversation "at long range." "How did you know we would be here?" we asked.

"We read it in a local paper. It's good to have you here. This means that something is happening and changing for the better."

Both sides were hurling badges, postcards and balloons. Somebody in the crowd on the bank began to sing. The Delta Queen was coming back to life; the song was being sung in two languages.

The same thing happened the following night. Sleep was voluntarily abandoned till a few hours before daybreak. The mayor of Muscatine brought practically the entire population to greet the Queen at the local lock. The town band performed the Soviet National Anthem.

Howard told me that once he went on deck for a breath of fresh air at four in the morning. Suddenly he saw a group of people on the bank. Somebody cried out: "Is this the boat the Russian party is in?"

"Yes, but they're asleep. Ought I to wake them?"

"No, of course not. We realize they're tired. We only wanted to see the steamer and be sure that they are really on board. We have been waiting five hours for you...."

Wanted or Unwanted?

Of course, many Americans came to the bank out of sheer curiosity. But was it curiosity alone?

When the Queen stopped at Davenport, Iowa, I had a talk with Thomas Hart, the mayor. He grew up in a family of 20 children. And, perhaps, the spirit of collectivism he acquired in childhood played a large part in the splendid welcome he organized for the participants in the cruise. This included a home-made meal in the garden of his house. He said: "The people were preparing for your arrival with enthusiasm."

"It is surprising that the farmers should display such an interest in us," I remarked. "In the last few years they have had plenty of worriers of their own. The papers often carry articles about farms being ruined."

"Yes, they have plenty of headaches," the mayor observed thoughtfully. "But despite this, the people of Iowa, as in no other state, keep abreast of developments in our relations with you. They want friendship and cooperation. We were trade partners over a period of many years! And the curtailment of trade with the U.S.S.R. has hurt many people. Many people here realize that we are part of one big world."

Shaking my hand, Merlyn Bradley, sixty-three-year-old fourth-generation farmer, said almost the same thing. Terry Logan, an engineer from the Caterpillar tractor manufacturing plant at Davenport, which is now operating at a third of its capacity owing to the distress the farmers are in, voiced the same idea: "That we need each other is obvious. Our plant cooperates with yours. But this is the first time I have met real-life Russians. And you are just like us."

However, several employees at the same plant preferred to turn away when we appeared.

Every day working groups from both parties held discussions aboard the Delta Queen. There were virtually no differences of opinion on concrete steps in pursuit of disarmament. In contrast with this, the causes of prejudice, bias and mistrust between our peoples and the ways of surmounting them gave rise to prolonged disputes. Were the Americans ready to take a new view of the world? There was no unequivocal answer.

It was interesting to hear what the Americans thought about themselves.

"We are not interested in any government we cannot get an extra dollar from."

"The point is that we are too self-opinionated. We have come to believe that we are better than others. We want other people to be like us, with all our merits and shortcomings. We tend to forget that other peoples see many things their own way...."

"There are people who have no jobs, no homes, people who live in poverty.

They have no time for world problems."

"I don't know about the Soviet Union, but the United States must have an enemy without a human face. An embodiment of evil, so to say. Otherwise, what do we need to manufacture arms for? U.S. TV, press and cinema have succeeded in producing such an image. What we see are not flesh-and-blood Russians, but a distorted reflection on the screen. What we need is exchanges with the Russians. It is difficult to hate a country where you have friends. It is easier to understand such a country...."

After a meeting I asked Gene La Rocque, retired admiral and director of the Centre for Defence Information, to give his impression of our discussions.

"All my conscious life" he said, "I worked at the Pentagon, planning nuclear war against you. I myself fought in three wars—the second world war, and the wars in Korea and Vietnam. At long last I have realized that war is the most stupid way of resolving conflicts between countries and that nuclear war is outright madness. However, the U.S. government regards the U.S.S.R. as an enemy. We do not trust the Soviet Union. Why? Because you have a different political system which is alien to ours. As for myself I would like to tell everybody that we can trust the Russians. We can believe that they will act in their own interests and that it is in their interests to prevent war. The Soviet Union realizes that its security depends on the security of the U.S. and vice versa. As far as the readiness of Americans for new thinking is concerned—thinking in terms of cooperation with you—we will have to cover more than one mile in pursuit of this goal."

With Open Eyes

Our cruise was coming to an end. During the last stopover at Hannibal, Mark Twain's native town, I approached Bill McLinn again. Becky Thatcher and Tom Sawyer coming aboard the Delta Queen with the mayor to lunch with us, Bill again impersonated Mark Twain. Even his voice changed. We recalled all the good and bad experiences.

Summing up, Bill said: "In many respects we are the same as we were a hundred years ago. Despite this, we are changing. Albert Einstein once made a comment about that kind of phenomenon: when you reach a certain critical mass of awareness of doing something in a new way, the entire culture transforms almost overnight. And he said further that the amount of the population that is required for that flashpoint is five per cent."

But Albert Einstein also said another thing: "The world that we have made as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far creates problems we cannot solve at the same level at which we created them." Watching the banks of the Mississippi recede I saw clearly how quickly and firmly this new thinking has taken root in the minds of my own fellow countrymen on the banks of another great river, the Russian Volga River which so closely resembles its American sister. But people in the United States are finding it difficult to accept this new thinking.

Perhaps it is the people of the Heartland, in whom the feeling of fellowship has always been strong and who have always helped one another in times of crisis, that are closest to reaching a critical mass of awareness of the need to undertake joint action.

Perhaps the interest shown in the cruise by ordinary citizens and local and national press and TV is an earnest of future change. Perhaps the English edition of the Soviet paper Pravda which is sold in a bookshop in Burlington, Iowa, is likewise an earnest There are also other harbingers.

New York, U.N. Headquarters, August 8. We, the representatives of Soviet and U.S. peace supporters, walked up to a table with the text of "A People's Appeal for Peace" in the Russian and English languages, which calls for a verifiable comprehensive nuclear test ban; a freeze, phased reduction and eventual elimination of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons; a transfer of resources from military to human needs; an increase of people-to-people contacts. In a year's time copies of this text signed by millions of people in both countries will be presented to the leaders of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., as well as to the U.N. Secretary-General.

As I affixed my signature to the Appeal I returned in my mind to the memorable evening in St. Paul. A booklet circulated by the organizers of the concert contained a sort of credo for a person living in the nuclear age. It read as follows: "I am a member of the Human Family. My home is Earth. The achievements of Men and Women throughout the ages are my heritage. Let me do no harm to my Family. Let us not do harm to those yet to come." Many of the Americans we met or did not meet as we sailed down the great river are prepared to accept this credo as their own. They are the New America. Many have yet to open their eyes to see how small and crowded our world is. To save it we must realize that we are in the same boat—the Earth.

Washington—St. Paul—Saint Louis—New York—Moscow

Photo by author

Washington, forsaken by the President and his aides and the lawgivers alike for the three-week recess, is now excitedly discussing "radical changes." The Washington Post's Mary McGrory even speaks of Congress "carrying the banner of arms control." This correspondent has been covering Washington politics for decades and her wealth of experience and incisive mind have long induced her, given her natural penchant for irony, to resort to unveiled sarcasm. No wonder she employs her usual style to describe the latest developments on Capitol Hill.

So who are the standard-bearers? Les Aspin in the House and Bennett Johnston in the Senate. No matter how much one wanted to, it would be hard to refrain from sarcasm.

Aspin, chairman of the Armed Services Committee who won the high office by pledging to captain the House's movement against MX, broke his promise the moment he was elected. He followed this up by denying support for programmes to cut back on military allocations. This all added up to the succinct opinion that Aspin "does not belong in a position of leadership." However, when a new candidate emerged and quickly won support, he quite unexpectedly led the forces advocating a nuclear test ban.

Though Bennett Johnston is a hawk notorious for his "obsession with defence," he is currently canvassing for the office of Democratic minority leader now filled by Robert Byrd, counting on gaining support in the Senate by associating himself with opponents of increased "star wars" appropriations.

At a closer look this is how matters stand with the Congressional standard-bearers. Still, Mary McGrory, who knows total lack of scruple at first hand, considers the House amendment for a year-long nuclear test moratorium a turning point. This is not because hawks are rooting for it, but because they can no longer obstruct it or, rather, ignore the new alignment of forces.

Unexpectedly for most observers, the main events came in mid-August when Congress, as is usually the case before the recess, was frantically scrambling through a pile of unfinished business. After the dust of the backstage deals, mutual recriminations, persuasion and mid-night sessions died down, it transpired that Congress had voiced loud disagreement with the basics of Reagan's defence and arms control policies, as one paper reported.

Though it is premature to say how serious this challenge is and what consequences it may have, the fact is deserving of note.

At Sixes and Sevens

Growing Differences between the White House and Congress

When debating the Administration's military budget for the 1987 fiscal year, which starts on October 1, the House adopted the following amendments:

— by a significant majority it voted for the promulgation as of January 1 of a year-long moratorium on nuclear tests in excess of one kiloton (the present ceiling being 150 kilotons);

— it has banned appropriations for the deployment of nuclear weapon systems outside of SALT-2;

— it has extended for one more year the ban on satellite killer tests;

—by 210 to 209 votes it maintained the ban on the manufacture of binary chemical weapons;

— by 239 votes to 176 it reduced "star wars" appropriations, endorsing the sum of $3.1 billion instead of the Administration's requested $5.3 billion, while the Senate endorsed the sum of $3.95 billion;

— finally, it lopped $34 billion off the military budget, allowing $286 billion instead of the $320 billion requested by the Administration.

None of the foregoing decisions are final. They have yet to be debated this month in the Congress Conference Committee, which resolves differences between House and Senate. Hence, the budgetary battles on Capitol Hill are still in full cry, though there are only a few weeks to go before the new fiscal year. For his part, the President has already threatened a veto. One must also bear in mind the inconsistency of Congress, as is illustrated by the Senate's manifest vacillation and the House's timidity. For instance, the vote taken to declare a nuclear test moratorium as of January 1, not earlier, is not fortuitous, as it will enable the Pentagon to stage two planned explosions, one of which is of special importance as the latest warheads for the Trident-2 missile are to be tested.

Still, according to Congressman Thomas Foley, the vote on the military budget reflects disagreement with the level of military spending and the desire to get the Administration to make a serious arms control effort. For the first time an attempt has been made to impede the arms race by banning continued nuclear testing not, moreover, by a mere recommendation, but through mandatory amendments.

Of course, the lawgivers are motivated by diverse considerations, which not infrequently have no bearing on arms control, as is emphasized by that seasoned commentator Mary McGrory.

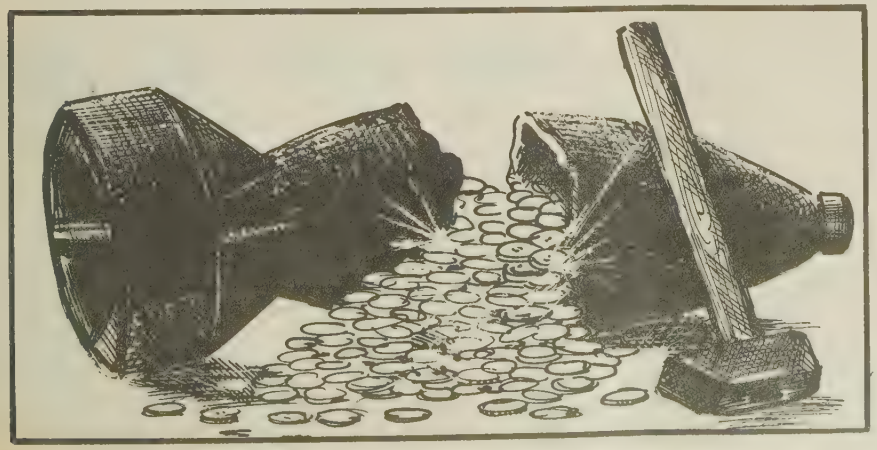
The elections this coming November 4, when the entire House and a third of the Senate are to stand again are certainly being taken into account. The desire to take sides on a definite issue beforehand is understandable. However, today it is the electorate that prompts the issue. In the view of the Congressional leaders, the Washington Post writes, the House vote "reflected growing national scepticism over both the military buildup and Reagan's determination to achieve a new arms control agreement." Developments in Congress indicate the increasingly perceptible role this factor is playing.

When launching his trillion-dollar "rearmament" programme, Ronald Reagan promised to strengthen U.S. security. The result, already observable, is a drastically exacerbated international tension along with actual renunciation of the quest for a way out of the nuclear impasse. The buildup of arms is incompatible with their limitation. Moreover, having done nothing to further arms control, the current Administration has begun, on the contrary, to dismantle the mechanism for this set up through the efforts of the two sides in the 1970s. The President's May 27 statement of his intention to abandon SALT-2's quantified restrictions on nuclear weapon systems, and his attacks on the anti-missile defence systems agreement speak volumes. Alarm is not confined to the increasing numbers of Americans who advocate negotiations. Washington Post correspondents report that "Congressional leaders now say flatly that none of Reagan's spending initiatives on strategic weapons, including his Strategic Defence Initiative, will survive if he is seen as the cause of a breakdown in arms control negotiations."

Meanwhile economic storm clouds are thickening. The drastic slackening of business shows that the U.S. is entering another recession. The fantastic jump in the federal budget deficit to total $224 billion, according to forecasts for this year, and in the balance of foreign trade, totalling $170 billion, may entail a slump of catastrophic proportions.

All these facts, each sufficiently significant on its own, show that the situation is very grave. No doubts are entertained as to the consequences of the policy the U.S. adopted in 1981, while the divergences that are so distinctly in evidence between the executive and the legislature betray genuine anxiety and alarm. It is therefore vital to return to détente and abandon outdated notions of armed force and war as being instruments of politics. The Soviet stance affords chances of reaching a historic understanding.

Y. GUDKOV



Cartoon by V. Peskov

ENFORCED "INDEPENDENCE"

We are used to hearing about fighting for independence, but residents of the South African bantustan Kwandebele are doing what they can to avoid it....

Kwandebele is one of the ten bantustans set up by the racist authorities on 14 per cent of the territory of South Africa with the purpose of cooping up most of the country's 25 million blacks. About half a million blacks are forcibly evicted from South African cities to the bantustans every year. Four of the ten—Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana and Venda—have already been summarily declared "independent states."

The scheme works to the racists' advantage as follows. First, Pretoria absolves itself of all responsibility for the economic development of the bantustans. Second, "diplomatic relations" with the newly formed "states" are a pleasant but flimsy mirage in the desert of the isolation of the apartheid regime in the international community.

Kwandebele — about 400,000 people settled on 350,000 hectares of bare stony land—is to become "independent" on December 11. Kwandebele's economy, as Le Matin of Paris put it, is brilliantly conspicuous by its absence. The bantustan, which consists of 12 isolated "pens," has neither mineral resources nor industry, while anyone going in for farming is certain to die of starvation. Kwandebele is actually a huge dormitory with a single highway leading out of it. At 3 or 4 a.m. on every workday buses pick up shivering blacks and take them to factories in Pretoria or Johannesburg. The buses bring the workers back at 9 p.m. In the daytime Kwandebele is peopled only by children, the family of the tribal chief, Mabokho Malangu, and the "government."

Most Ndebele tribesmen do not want "independence," which only offers them even greater poverty. As for the workers, having become "foreigners," they will be denied even the meagre rights they have today. The Ndebele tribe rose in revolt, which the "government" of the bantustan tried to put down with the help of a group of security troops, the Imbokotho. People were tortured and killed. But in early August the Minister of the Interior and the Imbokotho chief was murdered, and his henchmen took refuge in a camp, which is being guarded by regular South African troops.

Eventually, on August 15 the Kwandebele "government" was forced to decline officially the "independence" offered by Pretoria. Yet it is the racists who will have the final say.

CHAPLIN'S HAT AND CANE TO STAY IN BRITAIN

David Robinson, Charlie Chaplin's biographer, has had to work hard to ensure that the famous bowler hat and cane of the great comic stay in Britain. When the relics were about to be auctioned, Robinson got several public organizations and individual sponsors to chip in to buy them. When the pool pushed the price to £15,000 at the auction, foreign buyers gave in. The hat and cane are going to be displayed in London's museum of film making.

MISCELLANY

● The U.S. another econ sion. The fed deficit in the next fiscal year will exceed stipulated by legislation by $20 billion, increase in the gross national product in quarter of this year was a mere 0.6 per worse showing since the trough of the 19 ic crisis.

● A piece of Northern England has bee look like "Soviet territory" with mock-u fighter planes, tanks and anti-aircraft from sack cloth and wood. A fleet of 70 from eight NATO countries strafed the in an exercise.

● France will introduce a new tax on al in 1987 and use the revenue to tighten a measures.

● A cooperative with a work force of bankrupt in Shenyang, the first such ba China. A cooperative goes into liquidat debts exceed the aggregate value of its p if its losses total more than 80 per cent of its fixed assets.

● The U.N. Secretariat has released a p ing the gross lies and ignorance of the research agency The Heritage Foundati often conducts studies for the White a recent study the Foundation claimed th department concerned with conference n is completely controlled by representativ "eastern bloc." According to official fig ever, on December 31, 1985, 35 of the 116 department were occupied by U.S. natio West Europeans and only 14 by official Soviet Union and other socialist countri

● About 50 ships have been attacked in Gulf this year in the course of the Ir hostilities, Lloyd's List reported. Alto ships have been damaged since the outb Iranian-Iraqi war in 1981. Casualties h dramatically as well: the death toll by t last year was 50, whereas already this people have been killed and about 50 w

● SCIENCE

A "HOLE" OVER THE ANTARCTIC

Atmospheric ozone is mysteriously vanishing in the skies over the Antarctic and the process is alarmingly swift. When spring comes to the Southern Hemisphere in October, a "hole" appears in the ozone layer which protects the Earth from ultraviolet radiation. By the beginning of summer it has closed, only to reopen anew the following year; moreover, it grows larger from one year to the next. In 1985, the "hole" in the ozone layer was as large as the territory of the U.S. Scientists have begun to study the phenomenon, suspecting that either natural climatic processes or atmospheric pollution are behind it.

Ozone is destroyed by nitrogen oxides, the by-products of combustion, and also freones, which are used in refrigerators and firefighting chemicals. The drop in the ozone content is fraught with disastrous consequences, such as higher incidence of cancer, the disappearance of some species of sealife, and poorer crops. If large amounts of ozone are destroyed in a nuclear war, civilization will perish.

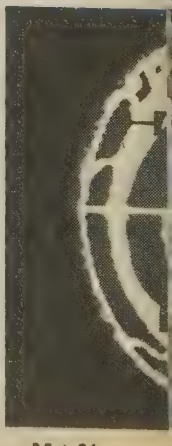


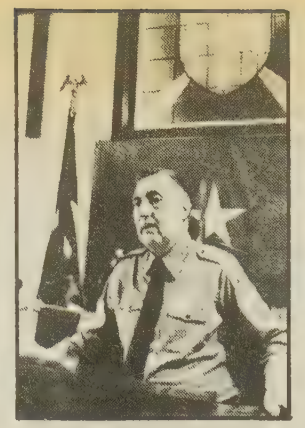
Photo from the International Herald Tribune (U.S.A.)

A NEW FAITH?

You will never hear priest Richard Butler of the wooden Church of Jesus Christ Christian in Hayden Lake, a resort in Idaho, tell his parishioners, "Love thy neighbour." Yet the philosophy of his "new faith" is really simple: all Jews are descended from Cain and all troubles, such as international communism and political liberalism, come from them. The preacher's attire is in keeping with the ideas of his neonazi sermons—see photo from the West German magazine Der Spiegel.

The flock of the brownshirt priest is not large, a mere 200 or 300, but his ideas have struck a chord with almost all rightists in the United States. And the priest goes out of his way to please all of them, burning a wooden cross in the backyard of his church for the Klansmen and calling for the establishment of a "Fourth Reich" in the five northwestern states of America for those who are obsessed with purity of blood. Butler is willing to be a religious and ideological support to the two terrorists who last May seized a school in Wyoming and demanded $300 million. Or to David Rice, who launched his personal war on communism and Jewish influence by killing the family of a lawyer in Seattle.

In addition to proselytizing, Butler hosts "survival courses," which are the latest fad in the U.S. Trainees learn in the churchyard how "silently and efficiently" to cut the enemy's throat.



TV BRIEFS

A group of Japanese have visited the graves of their relatives on the Kuril Islands for the first time in the last eleven years. This has become possible as a result of a bilateral agreement allowing such visits without visas.

The four American grain-growing states have struck deals to sell grain to South Africa in defiance of calls for sanctions against Pretoria.

The one-year-old military government of President Ibrahim Babangida has begun to move Nigeria's capital from overcrowded Lagos to Abuja, where a huge presidential palace and the world's second biggest Hilton Hotel, costing $230 million, have been built.

Dozens of officers and men of the repressive troops of the former Ian Smith racist regime, who fled to South Africa after the proclamation of independent Zimbabwe, have surfaced in the contra gangs which operate from Honduran territory.

The Chamber of Deputies of the Argentine Congress has approved a bill on divorce which will now go to the Senate. The present law does not allow divorce or remarriage. Over two million Argentines are unwilling "offenders."

HEALTH

A "BANDAGE" FOR THE HEART

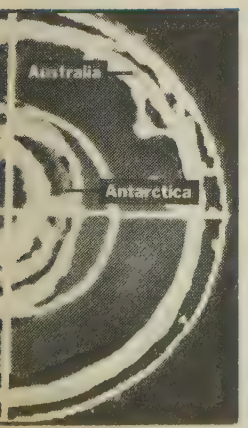
An American surgeon, George Magovern from the Pittsburg Allegheny General Hospital, has found a way to rehabilitate the pumping function of the heart, Time magazine reports.

During a five-hour procedure, he detached a latissimus dorsi (a broad muscle on the back of his patient), slipped it into the chest cavity and then wrapped it around the patient's heart like a towel.

His patient, Mary Jones, 46, had a bubble, or aneurysm, in her heart's left pumping chamber. After a week's recovery time, the surgeon began stimulating the transplanted skeletal muscle with a pacemaker, causing it to contract and help pump blood. Less than a year later, Ms Jones, whose history of coronary ailment included two heart attacks and who could hardly walk up a flight of steps, reported that she could walk a mile or two without difficulty and even play basketball with her daughter.

Dr Magovern stumbled on the idea by chance. Once he operated on a patient whose pacemaker was displaced. He said that his patient's pectoral muscle, which the "slipped" pacemaker was stimulating, had grown to double its usual size and could work tirelessly. It appears that the stimulation of skeletal muscles makes them work like heart muscles.

Cardiac surgeon Larry Stephenson of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School has created a mini-pumping chamber by wrapping conditioned skeletal muscle into a fist-size pouch, which he says can be used to boost circulation by as much as 20 per cent. The pouches can be located almost anywhere in the body. Stephenson believes that such auxiliary pumps could reduce the need for risky open-heart surgery and also obviate the need for transplants.



SNIPPETS

Denmark's Minister of Public Works Arne Melchior has resigned. He was charged with having spent more than 36,000 crowns of public money to celebrate his 60th birthday and another 6,250 crowns on a private dinner party.

Nancy Reagan's personal maid, Anita Castelo, has been arraigned on charges of helping illegally to export two cases of ammunition. They were to be sent to her native Paraguay on a freighter.

BBC correspondent Humphrey Hawksley has been expelled from Sri Lanka on charges of spying and terrorism.

A new record, Star Peace, has been made by Yoko Ono, widow of former Beatle John Lennon. Ono's concerts on a tour of the United States often evolved into peace demonstrations, and every concert culminated with Lennon's song "Give Peace a Chance."

The noted West German novelist Günter Grass has said he is going to leave his country for a year and settle in Calcutta. He thinks there is more genuine life in the slums of this Asian city than in Western society.

Regime Under Siege

Bullets fly and blood is flowing again in Pakistan's towns and cities. Scores of demonstrators have been killed and hundreds more injured. Again and again sirens announce the arrival of more police and troops and the departure of more detainees. Thousands have been jailed. These scenes have been familiar to Pakistanis since July 1977, when the army under General Zia ul-Haq toppled Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's civilian government. Two years later the unfortunate prime minister was executed. Similar scenes were to be observed in August and September 1983, during the spontaneous, uncoordinated and hence doomed attempt by various opposition forces to do away with the military dictatorship.

What have the nine years since 1977 brought the people of Pakistan? This was a question that many asked themselves on Pakistan's Independence Day on August 14. Many responded to the call of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy, which unites all opposition parties, by filling the streets to demand a genuine, rather than a shopwindow, return to a democratic order. The fact that tens of thousands took part in the demonstrations and rallies in Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Hyderabad and elsewhere, palpably indicates the popular attitude to the nine years of military rule. This spontaneous action, and determination, effectively illustrated by the casualties following the clashes and scuffles with the police and army, unequivocally demonstrate popular reluctance to continue under conditions where bullet and rifle butt are all the authorities are able to fall back on.

Laying aside for the moment the specific realities of the political struggle, let us consider the general situation, in town and country, and the atmosphere in which Pakistan's 100 million live today.

Life is largely shaped by "Islamization from above," which Zia ul-Haq launched shortly after usurping power. With the slogan "Islam is our religion, our economy, our rule" the General penetrated every aspect of life, whether law, education, economy or culture.

The function of the newly formed Federal Shariat Court is to see that the rulings and verdicts of the law courts conform to Islam. Traditionally Moslem medieval penalties, such as flogging, the amputation of limbs, and stoning to death are all in force.

In education the sexes are segregated. The study of the Koran and Arabic—with a view to promoting Pakistan's "achievements" outside the country, especially in conservative Arab states—is mandatory. The mass media are accordingly geared to the same aims. Civil servants are obliged to say namaz five times a day. Women must not take part in sports contests with men.

Nor has "Islamization" bypassed the economy. Some relevant innovations such as the promulgation of the zaqat tax for the benefit of the poor and the ushr tax on farm produce were relatively calmly received. However, the abolition of interest on investments and the bank rate almost sent Pakistan's entire capitalist economic system haywire. Eventually shrewd financiers found a way out, and continued to exact interest rates, though under another name. On the other hand, it is not easy to cope with falling basic national economic indices. The average annual growth rate is being maintained at 6 per cent only thanks to American financial injections. Meanwhile the external debt is in excess of $10 billion, with annual indemnification and interest payments totalling $1 billion. Private investment is melting away, whereas the budgetary deficit is climbing catastrophically. Export is stagnating. The deteriorating economic situation in the Middle East oil states has forced thousands upon thousands of Pakistanis to repatriate and this has not only curtailed the influx of desperately needed hard currency, but has also aggravated the unemployment problem, which is in a sorry state as it is.

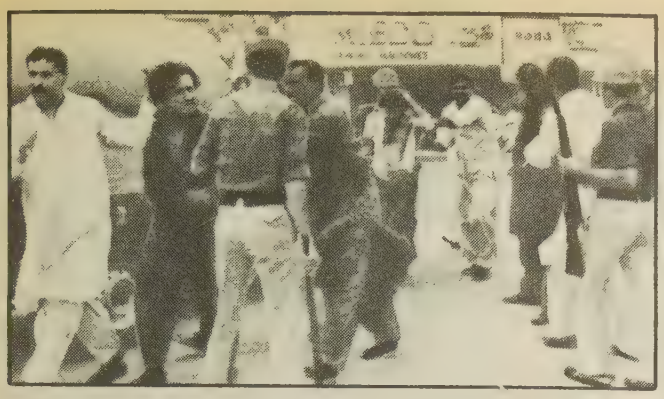
It is hard to say how far this plethora of anxieties and concerns worries the president in general's uniform. What is noteworthy is that just before the opposition's actions last month, of

The ANZUS Crisis. What Lies Ahead?

It may or may not be coincidence, but at almost the same time as the session of the South Pacific Forum held recently in the Fijian capital (see New Times, No. 34, 1986), a U.S.-Australian meeting attended by foreign and defence secretaries took place in San Francisco. For the last two years in succession these meetings have been convened instead of annual ANZUS sessions as Washington is refusing to hold them in connection with New Zealand's anti-nuclear stance. In Fiji and San Francisco the key issues relating to the South Pacific were discussed, though from different points of view.

The 11 states and 2 self-governing territories that make up the South Pacific Forum decided last August to declare the South Pacific a nuclear-free zone and conclude an appropriate treaty. The provisions of the treaty reflect the compromise between the different attitudes of the Forum's member countries, including such important questions as permission for ships carrying nuclear weapons to enter their ports. The treaty stipulates that each country shall resolve this problem on its own. The New Zealand government has already forbidden nuclear-powered ships and those carrying nuclear weapons to call at its ports. The decision has provoked sharp censure from Washington and led to the ANZUS crisis. Moreover, recently the United States formally broke off military relations with Wellington, stating that the U.S. hitherto refuses to guarantee New Zealand's security within the framework of ANZUS.

The ANZUS Security Treaty was concluded in 1951 and since then it has played an important role in the military and political strategy of the United States, serving as the cornerstone for Australia's and New Zealand's foreign and military policies. At the time Australia and New Zealand were motivated to set up the bloc by the danger of a revival of the Japanese militarism that the three countries had fought together during World War II.



Pakistani police dealing brutally with anti-government demonstrators.

AFP-TASS photo

which he knew in advance, Zia ul-Haq went on a pilgrimage to Mecca. This enables him to claim that he had no hand in the brutal suppression of anti-government demonstrations.

Who is at the helm in Pakistan today? Zia ul-Haq, the former chief martial law administrator and current president, who tries to keep a low profile, but whose hand is to be discerned in every move the authorities make? Or Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo who vainly strives to show that his cabinet is motivated exclusively by conscience, even though it is appointed by the president? Or the parliament, that "focus of popular resolve" as it is officially declared, which may be dissolved by presidential edict at any moment? Ask any Pakistani, and he will tell you that in his country democracy is still confined to the military, in their civilian disguise.

Yet one would be wrong were one to say nothing has changed in the years of military rule. The changes are obvious. The very fact of the general election last year, albeit without the involvement of political parties, is most eloquent. It shows above all the army elite's acknowledgement that dictatorial methods cannot continue indefinitely. Changes reflecting popular aspirations for democratization are to be seen throughout the entire spectrum of public life. Thus, in that self-same parliament whose members were most thoroughly screened by the authorities prior to election there has suddenly emerged a small, highly active opposition core. One fine day in May Fakhar Imam, speaker of the lower chamber, opposed insistent attempts from the government bench (from the general!) to dictate lawmaking. Of course, characteristically enough, by manipulating its absolute majority, the government at once replaced the speaker, for so far the odds are against the opposition.

The army, the military bureaucracy, are firmly entrenched at the helm of state and have put down roots in the economic infrastructure. They also enjoy powerful backing from the U.S.

Indeed the billions of U.S. dollars in the shape of arms or economic aid are taking effect. Washington has made Pakistan its main bridgehead for the undeclared war against Democratic Afghanistan, and a channel for exerting pressure upon India. In strength and weaponry Pakistan's army is one of the biggest in the region. On orders from Washington, it may be spearheaded in any direction, as the case of Afghanistan shows. Its operations aimed at facilitating infiltration of mercenary bandits into the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and ensuring their withdrawal to the many bases inside Pakistan, have been described time and again in the world press. Current developments indicate that this force could also be turned against the nation at home.

But sheer force far from always determines the directions history takes. History has demonstrated time and again that what counts is the inner strength a people shows in its aspiration to freedom and democracy. And this is most dramatically demonstrated today by the masses in Pakistan.

O. PLESHOV

Furthermore, they sought to ensure a military and political shift from Britain to the United States. The Australian ruling classes strove to confirm their role as Washington's most important ally in the Pacific.

But before long the cold war launched by Washington and the conclusion of the U.S.-Japanese Security Treaty imparted ANZUS an undisguised anti-Soviet and anti-communist orientation. The harnessing of Australia and New Zealand to the policy of "rolling back communism" led to their involvement in the wars fought by U.S. imperialism in Korea and Vietnam.

The dirty war in Indo-China taught the two countries a serious lesson and provoked an explosion of anti-war feeling. The realization of the need to change their foreign policy priorities helped bring Labour governments to office in Canberra and Wellington in the early 1970s. In the conditions of détente, relations with the U.S.S.R. and other socialist countries considerably improved. It was at that period that serious friction developed between Canberra and Wellington on the one side and Washington on the other.

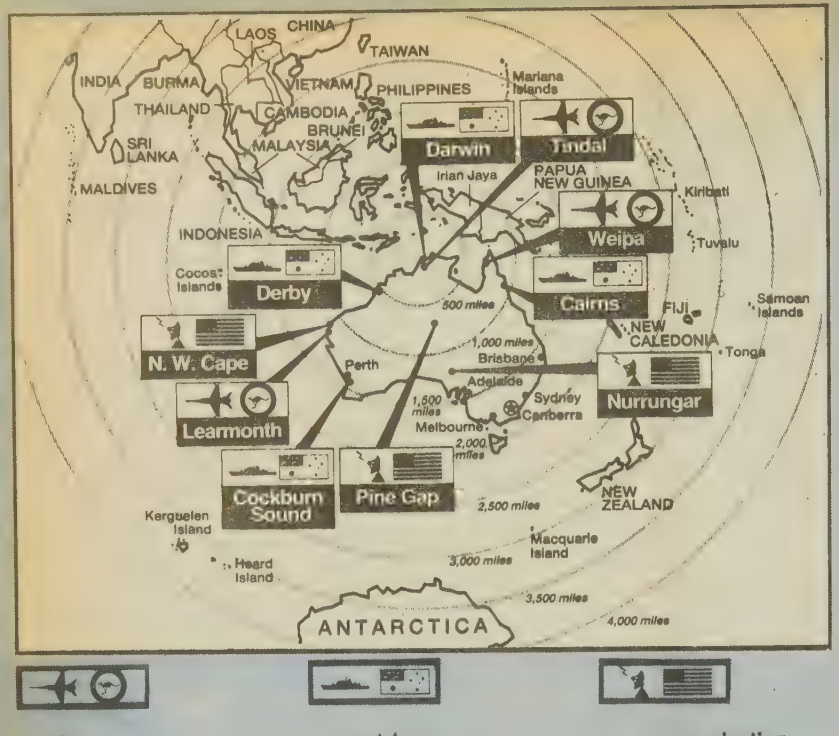
Looking back at the early 1970s one can recall the developments that caused bitter disapproval in Washington. First of all, there was a degree of political independence expressed in a ban on the entry of nuclear-powered naval ships into Australian ports (in force from 1972 to 1976); then there were the attempts to change the status of U.S. strategic installations on Australian soil, the "too close" attention to U.S. intelligence operations in Australia and some restrictions imposed on the activities of foreign capital. The United States exerted massive pressure on Australia and was instrumental in bringing down the Labour government.

As for New Zealand, the Labour government also banned ships carrying nuclear weapons from the country's ports, and sponsored an initiative for a nuclear-free zone to be set up in the South Pacific, as a result of which it too fell from power.

The return of Conservative governments in Canberra and Wellington froze the implementation of the nuclear-free zone for ten years. Pro-U.S. foreign policy gained ground again. The ANZUS operation zone was expanded geographically: in addition to the Pacific, it was extended to cover the Indian Ocean under the pretext of the "Soviet military threat." Relations with the U.S.S.R. were sharply reduced.

But the Pacific countries did not profit from such policies and this affected the foreign policy decisions made by the Labour parties after their return to government in March 1983 in Australia and July 1984 in New Zealand.

Economic, political and other interests link Australia and New Zealand ever more closely with Asia and the Pacific region. Varied and complex processes



air bases

naval bases

communication stations and other military installations

A map in the Hongkong weekly Far Eastern Economic Review marks major U.S. bases in Australia. The Pentagon's and CIA's electronic spy systems cover a large number of states in the Pacific, Southeast Asia and Indo-China. Here B-52 strategic bombers on the alert for a nuclear strike are refuelled, and it is from here that Washington's order to strike will be relayed to nuclear submarines in the Pacific and Indian oceans....

That is why the United States is trying to prevent Australia from catching the "New Zealand disease." The joint communiqué after the negotiations between Australia and the United States in San Francisco provides that relations between Australia and the United States within the ANZUS framework, as well as the rights and obligations assumed towards each other, remain fully valid. Canberra was invited to take part in a joint programme to restructure the navy and to make the offer more attractive, contracts were also promised to Australian firms.

At the same time, the U.S. threatened economic sanctions by reviewing trade and economic links. The threat primarily affects the trade unions and other social forces that are demanding that the government follow New Zealand's example. This action is well calculated as the Australian economy is experiencing recession.

at work in the area necessitate flexibility and a freedom of action in conducting a foreign policy which will not square with the global patterns designed in Washington. Wellington's anti-nuclear course is a manifestation of the clash between the regional orientation of the foreign policy of the bloc's junior partners and U.S. global strategy. On the face of it, the whole issue boils down to the conflict between Washington and Wellington on a single but crucial problem.

It is evident that Australia and New Zealand still attach great importance to their relations with the United States. But they wish to have room for manoeuvre and freedom of choice. Canberra has rejected the expansion of the ANZUS sphere of operations into the Indian Ocean. Heeding public sentiment throughout the country and trying to bolster Australia's claims for leadership in this part of the world, the Hawke government has assumed the initiative in elaborating and concluding a nuclear-free zone treaty. At the same time, the Labour government has been instrumental in carrying a resolution providing for each South Pacific Forum member state to decide individually whether it will allow aircraft or ships carrying nuclear weapons to enter its territory, with a view to keeping up Australia's commitments to the United States.

In his turn, David Lange, New Zealand's Prime Minister, does not question the existence of ANZUS as such, but merely challenges the principle of free access for U.S. ships carrying nuclear weapons to the allies' ports.

Washington openly frowned upon the South Pacific nuclear-free zone treaty, though its provisions are primarily directed against the nuclear tests France is carrying out in the region. A ban on the deployment of nuclear armaments creates, in the opinion of the United States, a dangerous precedent. For example, it may block the extensive use of the Micronesian islands as a place for the storage of nuclear armaments and developing a network of air and naval bases. It could be that the ferocious pressure exerted on New Zealand, despite David Lange's attempts to "settle the matter peacefully," is the result not only of the intention to put an end to New Zealand's anti-nuclear policy and to make the ally toe the line but also of the United States' disapproval of the nuclear-free zone treaty.

The ANZUS crisis has made Australians and New Zealanders stop and ask themselves if they need the bloc and the U.S. bases at all, the more so as the lease for Pine Gap, one of the most important bases, expires this October. The "value" of these bases has considerably diminished for the many Australians whose apprehensions about the U.S. military bases have been revived in the ANZUS crisis, not to mention those public figures, politicians and ordinary citizens who have long and persistently demanded the dismantling of the bases.

The present situation in ANZUS implies that a seemingly solid imperialist bloc may be badly cracked under the influence of the objective processes taking place in the world. The imperialist structure of blocs in Asia and the Pacific cannot stand the test of time (take, for instance, SEATO) since sooner or later it comes into conflict with the interests of the nations in the region.

At the same time the ANZUS crisis shows that medium-sized or small countries integrated in military-political blocs have very little room for manoeuvre in defending the national interests. In this respect, vast prospects and possibilities are opened up by the Soviet proposals that the region join the process of creating a universal system of international security which could facilitate the dynamic development of friendly and equal relations in politics, trade, economy, culture and other fields between all the countries in this part of the world.

V. AMIROV

Towards New Goals

On September 2 the people of Vietnam and their friends the world over will mark the 41st anniversary of the victory of the August revolution and the proclamation of Vietnam's independence. Today the country's working people, overcoming obstacles inherited from the past and caused by protracted wars, are laying the material and technical foundations of socialism. New targets on this highroad of constructive effort will be defined by the forthcoming 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

The triumph of the August revolution became possible thanks to the exceptionally auspicious internal and external situation created in 1945 for the Vietnamese patriots by the victories of Soviet armed forces over German fascism and Japanese militarism. The victory of the revolution was relatively easy, but it was followed by decades of the most severe trials. First it had to defend itself against French colonialists, who sought to restore their domination over the country but were defeated in 1954. After this came struggle against the oppressive Saigon regime created by U.S. imperialism and sustained by the force of American arms. The national goal of reunification was achieved only in 1975 when the patriots toppled the pro-American Saigon rulers. Before that, in 1973, Washington had had to sign the Paris agreement which confirmed Vietnam's right to sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

Following reunification, the Vietnamese people set out to build socialism throughout the country. In December 1976, a programme for the restoration of the war-torn economy and further development along socialist lines was worked out by the 4th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam which adopted the directives for the second five-year plan of economic development for the period 1976-80. Proceeding from the new situation the congress delineated the general line of the Vietnamese revolution: to adhere firmly to the principle of dictatorship of the proletariat; give effect to the right of the working people to be collective masters of the land; carry out reforms of production relations, ideological and cultural progress; accelerate socialist industrialization and the moulding of a new mentality; strengthen defence capability; contribute actively to the struggle of the peoples for peace, independence and socialism.

An important contribution to the further pursuance of this strategic line in the eighties was made by the 5th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam in March 1982. It emphasized that in this period the efforts of the party and the people would be concentrated on the promotion of agriculture, increase of the production of consumer goods and the creation of a number of branches of heavy industry indispensable to the further advance of the country.

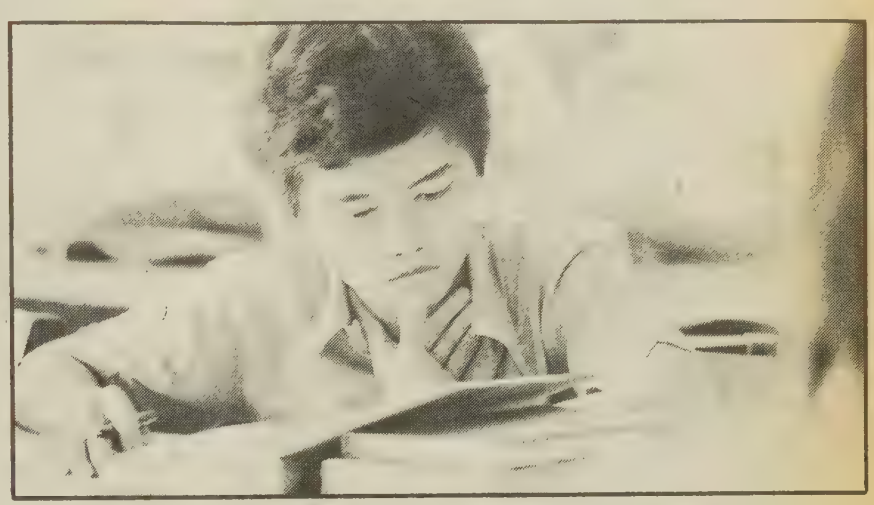
In the years since reunification the Vietnamese working people have registered successes in all spheres of economic and cultural advance, in the development of the productive forces and the strengthening and consolidation of the new, socialist relations of production. More than 300 major economic projects have been carried out, with the result that the country's production potential has substantially grown in many key branches of industry. The strengthening of the material and technical base and improvement of management in all branches of the economy made for a substantial increase in the growth rate of social production. For instance, the average annual growth rate of agricultural output during the last five-year-plan period (1981-85) increased to 5.1 per cent as against 2 per cent in 1976-80. In industry the corresponding percentages were 14 and 0.7. On the basis of the increase in production the scale of construction of housing and cultural facilities expanded. Strides were made in the development of culture, the arts, and medical care.

Active preparations are under way for the 6th Congress of the party. Party organizations are holding meetings at which past progress is summed up, achievements and shortcomings analyzed and new tasks outlined.

While resolving internal problems the Communist Party and the government of Vietnam devote much attention to foreign policy, specifically the promotion of friendship and cooperation with all countries and peoples of the world. Particularly notable is the progress made in promoting multiform relations between Vietnam and our country. In January this year a protocol on completion of the coordination of state plans of the U.S.S.R. and Vietnam for 1986-90 was signed in Hanoi. The protocol provides for measures relating to the implementation of the most important provisions of the long-term programme of economic, scientific and technological cooperation signed by the two countries in 1983 and also of the decisions of the CMEA economic summit conference in 1984. The protocol provides for a 1.7-fold increase in Soviet-Vietnamese trade in the course of this five-year plan; the U.S.S.R. will increase aid to Vietnam in the construction of important economic projects.

The people of Vietnam are working indefatigably to strengthen their country. With substantial successes to their credit in the building of socialism and defence of their country, in the struggle to strengthen its international position, the people of Vietnam are actively working with the fraternal peoples of Laos and Kampuchea for peace and security in Asia and the Pacific and throughout the world.

E. PAVLOV



In the years of people's government, the Ho Chi Minh City polytechnic has become a major institution of higher education in Vietnam. Today it has a student body of 3,300, not counting those studying by correspondence. This is almost double the 1975 figure. TASS photo

Rebirth of a Nation

Discussing the draft of a new constitution

The streets of Addis Ababa are usually crowded on Sundays. But this Sunday they were practically deserted: the discussion of the draft constitution of the future People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (P.D.R.E.) had begun in the kebeles (minidistricts).

The meeting I happened to attend was held in a huge tent. The audience was made up of men and women of different ages and occupations—factory and office workers, students, armymen, housewives. A young man in the blue semi-uniform usually worn by the activists of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia read out the text of the draft, article by article. Then the discussion began. There seemed to be no end to the questions from the floor. What difference would there be between the functions of the state and the party bodies? Why was the voting to be by secret ballot? Would it not be better for the National Assembly, i.e., parliament, to sit permanently considering the vast amount of work to be done? How to raise the funds to speed the cultural development of the countryside?

A constitutional commission of 343 persons—a democratic body that included party workers, scientists, armymen, peasants, writers, priests and even a pop singer—had been functioning since February. At the beginning of June the draft was published in large edition in the 15 principal languages of the Ethiopian people. It was also carried by the newspaper Sertoader and, for the information of the outside world, by the English-language Ethiopian Herald.

The discussion was truly nationwide. People were urged to ask any questions they wanted and to submit suggestions or amendments and additions orally or in writing, using for this purpose the bright yellow postboxes set up at city intersections, or else the telephone or telegraph. The questions asked at the meetings were answered by party workers and representatives of public organizations. Mengistu Haile Mariam and his wife attended the meeting held in their own neighbourhood. He listened attentively to the discussion and then addressed the gathering himself.

The constitution shortly to be submitted to a national referendum is not the first in the history of Ethiopia. In 1931 the young emperor Hailé Selassie I who had just ascended the throne decided to present his subjects with a constitution. There were no political parties or public organizations in the country at that time. Hence the proclamation of a constitution was a purely formal gesture. The two-chamber parliament, after the British model, merely upheld the rule of the dictator. The 1955 constitution, proclaimed after Hailé Selassie had been on the throne for a quarter of a century, was patterned after that of imperial Japan. It permitted elections to the lower chamber but only of "deputies" approved by the monarchy. Until the revolution of 1974 when the monarchy was overthrown the sham parliament rubberstamped the emperor's decisions.

The draft of the new constitution states that the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia will be a state of the working people. Its political base will be the alliance of the workers and peasants in cooperation with the intelligentsia, the revolutionary army, artisans and other democratic strata of society. The highest body of state power will be the National Assembly which will be elected by direct vote and secret ballot. In the period between sessions its functions will be performed by a State Council headed by the President of the P.D.R.E.

At the meeting I attended my attention was drawn to an elderly man sitting not far from me. He had the weather-beaten face and horny hands of a peasant. I watched him listening to the reading of the text and observed his reactions to one or another of the articles listed. When the meeting ended I approached him and we got to talking. His name is Regassa Fantaye and he is indeed a peasant but has recently moved to town. He has been a firm supporter of the revolution from the very beginning, for the simple reason that for nearly half a century he had toiled for a landlord. Not long ago he served in the people's militia and has now moved to the city to live with his older children. So as not to be a burden on them he works as a watchman.

Regassa was all ears when the section dealing with the economic system was read. The main objective of the state in building up the economy, it says, is to raise the living and cultural standards of the working masses and establish durable economic ties between the city and the countryside, between the centre and the outlying regions. To end the backwardness and create better social conditions in rural localities, bringing the scattered populations together in villages is encouraged.

Regassa told me something about his childhood. His native village consisted of only a few huts with the nearest settlement a half hour's walk and the only well even farther away. People and cattle lived under the same roof. Today the peasants are moving together into large settlements and setting up agricultural cooperatives. Much is changing and hence the rights and obligations of the citizens of the new Ethiopia—the right to work, to recreation, to education, and medical service—are no longer an abstraction for the peasants.

"We are already beginning to enjoy these rights," Regassa said.

"The People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia," the draft constitution states, "guarantees the equality of all the nationalities inhabiting it while being a unified state consisting of administrative and autonomous territories." The frontiers and status of such territories are still to be worked out and recorded in corresponding laws. And this is not easy to do in a country sometimes called "a museum of nationalities," of which there are about 90.

The adoption of the constitution is a logical step along the road of national-democratic revolution with the laying of the foundation for the building of socialism as its goal. In the opinion of the prestigious journal Africa it will give the country greater stability and enable it to concentrate on the tasks of economic upbuilding and development as a whole.

Taking leave of Regassa Fantaye, I asked him what he expected of the constitution. "A bright future," he replied without hesitation. I did not ask him how he intended to vote in the referendum.

G. GABRIELYAN
TASS correspondent,
exclusive for New Times

Addis Ababa

JOURNEY INTO THE 21st CENTURY

"Many new world processes have been tied into a tight knot," said Mikhail Gorbachev in his statement of August 18. "Disarmament could play an immense role here by releasing considerable funds, intellectual and technical potential for constructive purposes."

The tight knot of world problems can and must be unravelled. It is a long way from halting nuclear tests to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, but it is the only way to ensure a peaceful future.

In issue 28 of New Times we began publishing replies from public figures, writers and scientists to the question of what the 21st century would be like if the Soviet plan for nuclear disarmament were implemented and the world relieved of the nuclear burden.

We continue our symposium with contributions from three prominent scientists and public figures in the F.R.G., India and the U.S.S.R. The first two are devoted to the possible consequences of nuclear disarmament for the developing countries. The third contribution is by Academician Bayev, an eminent Soviet scientist.

This contribution comes from Dr PETER WAHL, member of the Secretariat of the Anti-Imperialist Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America (F.R.G.).

The Decisive Condition

Dr PETER WAHL

The consequences of backwardness and the economic exploitation of the Third World are becoming increasingly catastrophic. Every 14 months 50 million people die of starvation, as many as during the whole of World War II. Ecological catastrophes threaten increasingly: tropical forests are dying, deserts are advancing, and environmental pollution is reaching dangerous levels. Global changes of climate and the ecological balance may occur. There is a significant shortage of fuel, raw materials and food in many regions. Meanwhile the world's population is growing steadily, especially in Asia, Africa and Latin America. All these problems are inextricably bound up and confront mankind with the need for cardinal decisions.

The key to this is disarmament. It is an indispensable condition for the solution of global problems. That is why the Soviet proposal is historic in its significance, particularly for the Third World countries where three quarters of mankind live.

The U.S. quest for military superiority has aggravated the threat of war for these countries as well. The militarization of outer space is pushing Asia, Africa and Latin America closer to the nuclear abyss. To believe that the Southern Hemisphere would survive a nuclear holocaust is a dangerous and unfounded illusion.

Even if not a single bomb were to fall on the Southern Hemisphere (which is hardly possible) people would perish all the same, from global climatic changes. The Amazon would freeze up, the Egyptian pyramids would be covered with snow and Caribbean beaches blocked by floating ice. Siberian frosts would strike tropical countries where people have no suitable clothes or dwellings. Cattle would freeze to death. Food, which is in short supply even now, would disappear because of the frosts. Trade and international communications would be disrupted. A truly apocalyptic picture! If there are those who really believe it would be possible to weather the nuclear war somewhere in a cave in the Himalayas, they are mistaken. No cave will give protection from lethal radiation. Yet even if the worst does not happen, as it is the arms race is crippling for the Third World.

According to some estimates, the world spends about $900 billion on arms a year. Just one per cent of that sum would be enough to provide all Third World nations with clean drinking water. The cost of a single war plane would be enough to build and stock 40,000 rural pharmacies. Instead of one tank, 1,000 classrooms for 30,000 schoolchildren could be built.

Third World indebtedness has meanwhile approached a trillion dollars. Interest payments net giant transnational banks over $60 billion annually. The already far from favourable economic situation in the developing states is thus further aggravated. In fact, they have been unwittingly made an additional source of financing for the Washington arms programme.

The arms race is draining the Third World not only of financial resources but also of raw materials, fuel and manpower resources. Loss of capital through the brain drain, the emigration of scientists and intellectuals from the developing countries, is estimated at $10 billion per annum. The realization of the SDI programme by the U.S. would further aggravate the problem.

The squandering of raw materials and fuel on maintaining armies and manufacturing arms causes economic damage and creates new political problems. Imperialism is interested in securing cheap sources of raw materials and is using every means at its disposal to do so, including military force. This is one of the reasons for interventionism and modern forms of the imperialist "gunboat politics." An element of the same policy is the harnessing of the Third World to the Pentagon's global strategy, right down to involvement in the "star wars" programme. A typical example is the fate of Easter Island off Chile. The Pentagon plans to use it as a stand-by landing strip for American space shuttles which are known to be carrying out primarily military programmes. This region will thus be used to promote U.S. global objectives and in the event of a conflict would inevitably become a potential target for Soviet retaliation.

The implementation of the Soviet proposals could extinguish the flash-points of conflict in the Third World, reduce tension and in general weaken imperialist pressure on small and developing countries. Their sovereignty would be strengthened and they would be able to choose their path of development without outside interference. Cooperation, trust and the peaceful settlement of conflicts would become the norm in relations between nations and pressure, interventionism and mistrust would become a thing of the past. The Third World countries would then be able to come to grips with their outstanding problems.

■

Our own correspondent in Delhi Leonid Zhegalov contacted a prominent Indian political and public figure ARJUN SINGH. His opinion is given below.

From the Dream to the Reality

ARJUN SINGH

The question raised by your magazine is perhaps less a matter of conjecture than of practical political action.

Arjun Singh pauses. He is not a science fiction writer. He is the Number 2 in the ruling Indian National Congress (I) party, after Rajiv Gandhi. He is the party's vice-chairman, a practical politician.

Not that political leaders are not given to dreaming, he says. Simply, unlike science fiction writers, we always relate our dreams to political realities, the realities which prevent the dreams from coming true. As Indira Gandhi told the 7th Non-Aligned Summit in Delhi in March 1983, all our dreams would turn to ashes if there was no peace. Today, three years later, this statement is, if anything, more relevant because the threat to peace has grown immeasurably. Sometimes people in the developing countries, burdened with the load of local and immediate problems, underestimate the importance and necessity of the struggle against the nuclear menace. Yet if nuclear war is not prevented, what is the point of all our efforts to achieve national independence and social progress? And will mankind have the chance to celebrate its entry into the third millennium?

This possibility should be ensured, and ensured today. Let us relate the initiative of the six countries—India, Tanzania, Argentina, Mexico, Greece and Sweden—to the prospect of our planet surviving into the third millennium. This initiative focusses attention on the need for nuclear disarmament. The first step in that direction is to halt nuclear tests. By its decision to extend its unilateral nuclear test moratorium until January 1, 1987, the Soviet Union has brought closer the prospect of a non-nuclear year 2000. India and its colleagues in the initiative of the six will seek to induce other nuclear powers to follow the Soviet example.

The Soviet initiative has been described as propaganda in some quarters. Well, as Rajiv Gandhi has said, it would be a good thing if all those concerned came out with similar propaganda. Then humanity could hope to have made a real stride forward by the beginning of the new century, ridding itself of nuclear bombs.

In general, the year 2000 has a kind of magic for developing countries. For they are far more remote from the benefits of civilization associated with it than the developed states. To bring these benefits closer peace is imperative. That is why the non-aligned movement considers the struggle for peace to be its fundamental task. It consistently comes up with initiatives aimed at averting the threat of nuclear war.

It is heartening that these initiatives, like the initiative of the six, are consonant with Soviet foreign policy. Take, for example, the Soviet proposals to rid the planet of nuclear weapons by the year 2000 contained in Mr Gorbachev's Statement of January 15. If these proposals were put into practice, the threat of nuclear war would be a hideous memory of the past by the beginning of the new century. Humanity's dreams of progress in every field would become a reality. Hunger, disease, poverty—everything that plagues vast areas of the planet would have been overcome by the efforts of men released from the nuclear fear. So far these are dreams, but they are of great practical relevance today. That is why India will do everything in its power to induce those concerned to respond constructively to the Soviet initiatives. We shall work to mobilize world public opinion to this end.

People link their future with the exploration of outer space and our Galaxy. At the moment, outer space is facing "development" of a different kind. India is known to be a resolute opponent of the American "star wars" plans. On the initiative of the Soviet Union the 40th session of the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolu-

tion on preventing the arms race in outer space. If implemented, it would enable our planet to enter the year 2000 in the cradle of a space free of nuclear and other weapons. Indians hope that by that time only peaceful spaceships will fly above us. Our cosmonaut Rakesh Sharma said that from outer space India looked like an amber necklace. May our planet remain in the third millennium just as it was seen by the Soviet-Indian space crew. And let outer space be an arena for the peaceful efforts of mankind.

These efforts will, by the year 2000, have borne still more generous fruit if mankind is relieved of the need for military spending. One can begin with the Soviet initiative, supported by the non-aligned movement, that would have the states that are permanent members of the U.N. Security Council cut their defence budgets and direct part of the resources thus released towards the needs of economic and social progress in the developing countries. The implementation of this proposal would open up a breathtaking prospect. Alas, we are again confronted with the harsh reality: this can only be if the other members of the Security Council respond to the Soviet proposals.

In general, people sometimes have to pay dearly in their quest for progress. The Chernobyl disaster caused pain to all honest people. In India, Chernobyl was perceived as another toll of the bell, another stern warning of the danger posed to mankind by an atom that has got out of human control. This lent greater urgency to the question of the early implementation of the proposals to curb the arms race put forward by the non-aligned movement, the Soviet Union and the six. Those who support the stockpiling and development of nuclear weapons must give a constructive answer to these initiatives.

How many "musts" there are on the way to the year 2000, Arjun Singh concluded. Fantasy, if it is divorced from reality, stumbles against political immorality. To translate fantasy into reality is the goal of practical politics. Sustained by the dream of people of good will we must make our odyssey into the third millenninum under the sails of peace. ■

The significance of the release of material resources and creative and intellectual energy if Soviet peace inititatives are realized is discussed by Academician ALEXANDER BAYEV, Hero of Socialist Labour, who presides over Soviet research in the field of genetic engineering and biotechnology and is a winner of the State Prize and the prize of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers, and an honorary member of a number of foreign academies.

A Window into the Mysteries of Life

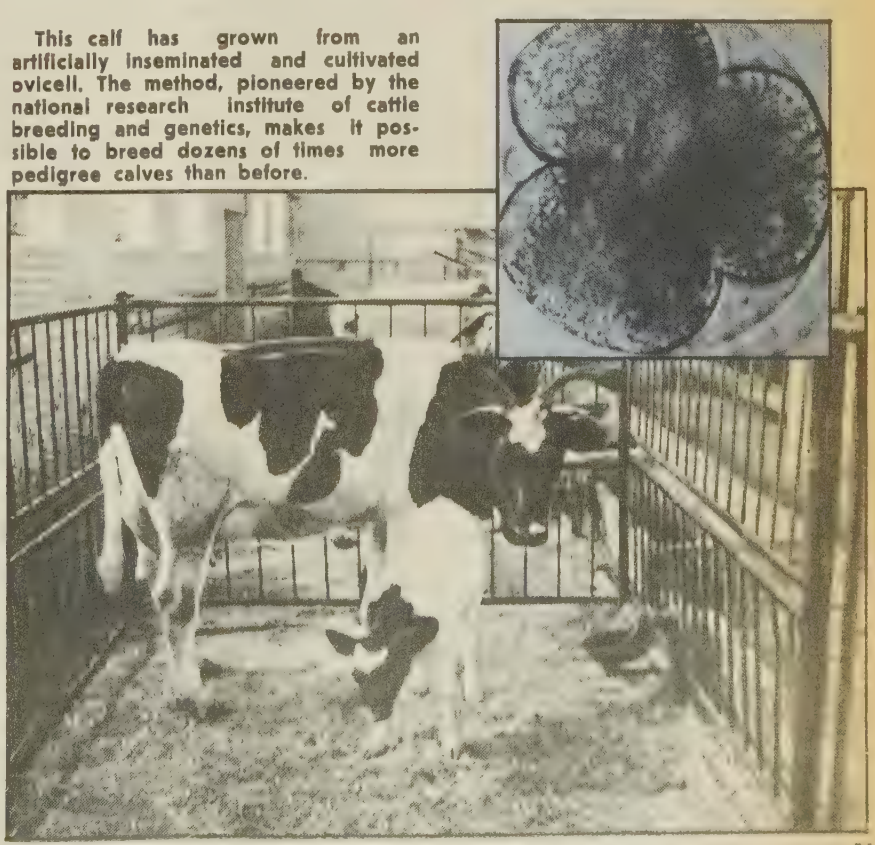
Academician ALEXANDER BAYEV

Anticipating your questions about the prospects that would open up if the Soviet plan to eliminate nuclear weapons by the year 2000 is realized, I would like to express my profound conviction that the renunciation of nuclear weapons would be tantamount to a renunciation of violence as a means of settling conflicts and confrontations. The jettisoning of the nuclear burden would liberate mankind from fear, and enable people to use their creative potential for their own good.

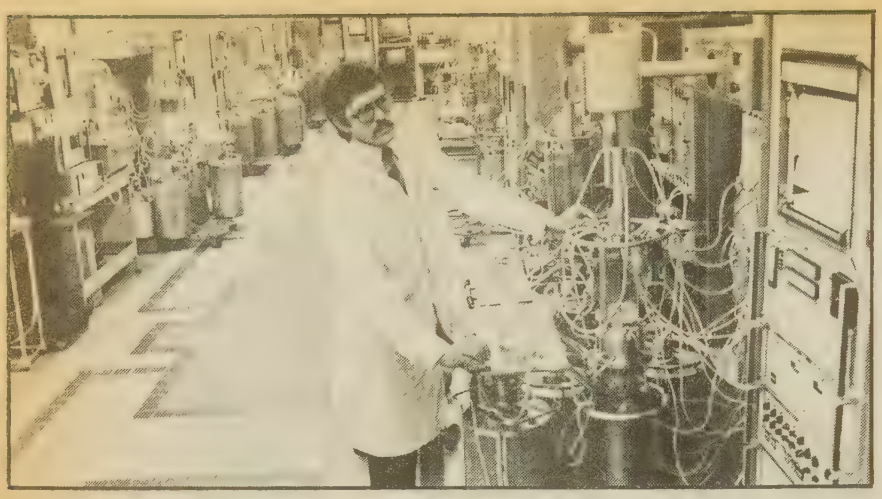
One should bear in mind that biotechnology, for example, requires a great deal in the way of laboratories and institutes, computers and biochemical agents and industrial plant. If the amount of money the nations spend on these things today were doubled, a great leap forward would occur.

N.T. Let us imagine that this has happened. What breakthroughs in the sciences in which you are involved could we expect in the 21st century?

A. Bayev. As regards genetic engineering and biotechnology, fantasy is a poor guide to the future, if one approaches the matter seriously. In-



This calf has grown from an artificially inseminated and cultivated ovicell. The method, pioneered by the national research institute of cattle breeding and genetics, makes it possible to breed dozens of times more pedigree calves than before.



The processes developed and tested at the institute of biochemistry and the physiology of microorganisms of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences are being widely introduced in the rapidly expanding microbiological industry.

cidentally, current progress in biology has not been predicted in scientific and technical forecasts. Even such a daring science fiction writer as Arthur Clarke gave 2030 as the date for the birth of biotechnology. He believed it would happen when man made contact with extraterrestrial civilizations and extracted minerals in outer space. Reality has outstripped his fantasy by a half century. We did not need aliens from outer space to do that.

So, it is impossible to foretell future developments. I am sure they are unpredictable. Let us proceed from current developments.

N.T. Let us say, from advances in biotechnology. What prompts the need to develop industrial processes based on the use of biological agents and reactions basically different from traditional ones?

A. Bayev. Biotechnology is called upon to help in the search for sources of food, which is still so scarce for a considerable part of mankind. According to FAO, the U.N.'s specialized agency monitoring the world food situation, the world produces about 75 million tons of food protein a year. This means about 60 grammes per person a day. Meanwhile doctors estimate that the average necessary intake is 100 grammes. In other words, even if food is distributed equally, malnutrition is inevitable today. The burgeoning microbiological industry is trying to make up the deficit. Let me add that protein is consumed not only by man but also by farm animals. True, they use less valuable vegetable protein, but their needs have to be taken into account as well.

Microorganisms are capable of extraordinarily rapid growth. Some bacteria can double in number every 5-8 minutes. This means that the amount of protein, which constitutes as much as 85 per cent of microorganisms, grows at the same rate. By way of comparison: a cow; which weighs half a ton, forms about half a kilogramme of protein in 24 hours. In the same period, a yeast mass of the same weight can synthesize 50 tons of protein.

It has long been known that yeast can be grown on molasses, sulphite alkali from cellulose plants, and some other wastes. Such cells are wonderful accumulators of proteins and vitamins obtained in very cheap media. If all suitable wastes are put to use in the 21st century, they will yield millions of tons of high-quality feeds. They would be an adequate substitute for soya and even fish meal, an excellent additive to natural animal feeds. Wide use is currently being made of microorganisms which feed on components of oil. By absorbing hydrocarbons, they transform them into proteins, fats, carbohydrates, and vitamins. Almost every ton of hydrocarbons would thus yield up to a ton of proteins. The use of methane and hydrogen gases is next on the agenda.

N.T. A tempting prospect. And yet, if I hazard to suggest that eating with gusto is one of the joys of human existence, would we not be deprived of a singular pleasure by switching totally to artificial foods?

A. Bayev. Why should the switch be total? Making up for protein deficiency by microbiological means is just one possible approach. The aim is to put the production of feeds from physiologically active substances on a fully industrial basis. But it is not a question of abandoning traditional farm production. People will merely supplement it with microbiological food.

In future, the use of microbiological protein in human food will be common practice. Today it is just a prospect, but the feed protein required for adequate feeding of domestic animals is already produced in thousands of tons at many factories in this country. I think we are on the threshold of a new era in food production. It is a new reality which has a great future.

N.T. So far we have concentrated on industrial microbiology. However, biotechnology includes other areas, such as, for example, cell or genetic engineering. What does this area hold in store for us?

A. Bayev. Even now the level of cell engineering makes it possible to obtain the physiologically active substances contained, say, in ginseng or rauvolfia, not only from these plants but from their cells grown in artificial conditions. We get test-tube fruits and berries, grapevine, fodder grasses and potatoes.

N.T. I can understand why you chose ginseng, but what about vines and potatoes?

A. Bayev. There is ample reason for us to try to do that. To begin with in this way we can replicate the plant quickly, many times faster than by planting it in the soil. We have found that in many cases laboratory replication is more convenient and economical. Decorative plants such as orchids as well as grapevines are already replicated in this way: in test tubes, the plant is grown not from seeds or tubers, in the usual way, but from tiny pieces of plant tissue. They are treated as microorganisms. There are ways of obtaining virus-free potatoes, which have much higher yields than ordinary potatoes which are, as a rule, affected by viruses.

N.T. Methods have been developed for transferring genes from one plant to another. What practical use do you see for this breakthrough?

A. Bayev. Initially such a transfer could only be effected for genes that were easy to experiment on but had no economic value. Recently there has been a breakthrough: we have transferred stability genes to two common herbicides. This is a step towards practical application.

Gene transfer could provide an answer to one of the main agricultural problems—providing plants with assimilable nitrogen. In nature it is like this: in the nitrogen cycle, part of the nitrogen is transferred from the biosphere to the atmosphere, from which it is removed by special nitrogen-fixing bacteria. It is then assimilated by plants.

This cycle is not adequate for present-day intensive farming, and we cannot do without mineral fertilizers. These are costly and not entirely harmless to the environment. Naturally, we are turning our attention to gaseous nitrogen in the atmosphere in which the plant is literally bathed but which it is unable to utilize without nitrogen-fixing bacteria. Yet even in this case assimilated nitrogen is not enough to ensure high yields.

Can genetic engineering be of help here? Yes, it can. So far we have no

ready agronomic methods, but we have identified lines of research. One is more realistic, the other appears utopian. With the first method, an attempt is made to create nitrogen-fixing bacteria capable of symbiosis with a certain plant and supplying it with nitrogen. This applies to wheat, rye and other cereals which have no natural nitrogen-fixing symbionts. With the second method, the aim is to transfer nitrification genes to the plant which will subsequently be able to assimiliate atmospheric nitrogen. But there is much that we do not know: such tampering may disrupt the plant's physiology and would thus fail to yield the desired result.

N.T. What are the "healing" prospects of genetic engineering?

A. Bayev. The possibilities are limitless. Not content with existing microorganisms and cells of higher organisms to obtain the necessary product the scientist creates new genetic structures in the laboratory. Intensive experiments are under way involving the introduction of alien genes into a microbe cell. We can already make the cell manufacture uncharacteristic products: the alien gene imposes its own type of metabolism. By introducing a human insulin gene into a bacterium in a microbiological plant (rather than in the pancreas of an animal) we can synthesize insulin, a product on which millions of diabetics depend. Curative blood proteins, ferments and other substances could be produced in unlimited quantities (and, in time, quite cheaply) if the genes responsible for the synthesis of these substances are introduced into bacteria. Another exciting challenge is the synthesis of vaccines and immune anti-bodies to prevent and treat infectious diseases, including those caused by viruses.

Let it be remembered that mankind is burdened by a multitude of hereditary diseases (about 4,000). Fortunately, most of them are rare, but all of them cause great suffering. Hereditary diseases are caused by one or several defective genes. Modern diagnostics and other measures decrease the incidence of such diseases but they cannot eliminate them. Treatment is only known for a few forms, and in most cases it brings only temporary and partial relief. Treatment of these diseases by grafting healthy genes into the cells of people with hereditary defects to replace the malfunctioning gene has been mooted for two decades. At first the idea seemed utopian but now there is real promise. Positive results have been obtained in experiments with fruit flies and mice.

With humans, of course, things are more difficult. If we are to solve the problem of gene therapy we must have a deeper knowledge of the regulation of cell activity and tissue compatibility. But hopes of success are rising.

N.T. How do you see the process of getting rid of the burden of hereditary diseases?

A. Bayev. First, we already have techniques for the early diagnosis of at least some hereditary diseases, even in utero. Second, genetic prevention will become routine. Prospective married couples will be able to get genetic counselling from competent specialists.

N.T. Can genes be effective against cancer?

A. Bayev. Over the past decade advances in molecular and cell biology and genetic engineering have led to a new conception of malignant tumours. It can now be confidently said that cancer is a disease of the genetic structure of the cell which acquires a capacity for uncontrolled and aggressive growth. It is clear that tumour development is a multistage process caused by many external as well as internal factors.

These new insights into cancer may give rise to pessimism as they have revealed the complex nature of the disease. But there are really no grounds for such pessimism. In fact the more complex the process of tumour development, the more opportunities there are for treatment and prevention, the more chances there are of identifying "soft spots," learning to influence them and eventually arriving at a cure. Determined and purposeful research is bound to bring success.

N.T. On the subject of genetic engineering, the question that is inevitably raised is, can it be used to create new organisms?

A. Bayev. The notion of "new" lends itself to different interpretations. Furthermore, despite all the advances in genetics, our ideas of the structural basis of gene regulation are still far from adequate. So far, we can introduce only a limited number of genes into the cell of a bacterium or higher organism. Hence there are limits to the extent of change that can be effected in the genetic type of cell. The possibility of introducing into a cell alien information referring to a different variety, let alone type, could make all the difference. An E coli bacillus containing working human genes can certainly be considered a new organism.

Already there is a possibility, in principle, of obtaining new plants with the help of genetic and cell engineering. So far it is unclear how effective these methods may be in "constructing" new farm animals. But sooner or later this would happen too. Let me stress an important circumstance. Accident, which is the chief factor in the evolution of living forms, recedes into the background in genetic engineering, in which the aims, ideas and skill of the scientist are paramount. There is no doubt that in the 21st century geneticists will be in the same position as specialists in chemical synthesis who have long departed from natural models and are engaged in creating a vast world of wholly man-made organic compounds.

Finally, I would like to make this point. As a biologist I hope that the creative and intellectual energy and material resources released as a result of disarmament would be used to restore and improve man's natural environment. Considerable damage has already been done to nature. Also important is the atmosphere of trust which would arise as a logical result of the renunciation of nuclear weapons. This would enable people all over the world to come together to solve this urgent problem. As for the problems discussed above (and they are only some of many), their solution requires great material outlay and intellectual effort. Armaments are not only costly. They divert talented people from humanitarian tasks. The atmosphere of tension disrupts creative research and thinking, which form the basis of the complex mechanism of scientific work. When nuclear arms disappear, scientific research will be presented with new opportunities. I am convinced that the Soviet government's decision to extend the nuclear test moratorium is an unprecedented step in that direction.

Interviewed by B. BALKAREY

The Troubles of the "Rich Coast"

From our own correspondent VLADIMIR DOLGOV

Costa Rica is Spanish for "Rich Coast." It was named thus by Christopher Columbus during his fourth voyage to the New World in 1502. The great navigator was impressed by the extraordinarily luxuriant vegetation of these parts.

Today too the beauty of the country's nature and its gentle climate captivate the visitor. The crystal pure waters of its mountain streams teem with trout. Its picturesque valleys are covered with coffee plantations, whose role in the economic life of the country can hardly be overestimated. To some they have brought wealth, to others poverty. The scions of well-to-do planters' families are invariably Costa Rica's political leaders and presidents.

On the fertile Atlantic coast banana groves reach out to the horizon. Bananas, too, are part of the country's wealth. They are also associated with the long history of the Costa Rican people's struggle for independence against the powerful American United Fruit and United Brands corporations, and with the history of the fight waged by agricultural labourers for their rights.

In the mountains in the heart of the country the majestic contours of the Irazu volcano rear skywards. Tourists make pilgrimages here. In 1967 it erupted, pouring forth streams of lava. Today children climb the mountain slopes to the summit as if it were a playground. From an altitude of three and a half kilometres a view opens on clear days on two oceans at once—the Pacific and the Atlantic.

Small, attractive towns and villages line the highways. Among the strings of motorcars one often sees two-wheeled carts hauled by horses or oxen, or even by people. Decorated with gay designs these carts are one of the sights of Costa Rica, and miniature models of them have become traditional souvenirs sold in numerous shops or simply in the streets. There are actually contests for the most colourful designs.

The living standard in Costa Rica is higher than in other Central American countries. Here you do not see the appalling poverty encountered in Honduras, Panama or El Salvador. Nor are there so many beggars on city streets. The per capita income is $900 a year, against $250 in Honduras, for instance. Ninety per cent of the population are literate and 40 per cent attend school or university. Some progress has been made in the sphere of public health and social security. Costa Rica has the lowest (after Cuba) child mortality in Latin America. The unemployment rate (6-8 per cent) is lower than in other Latin American countries.

There are many reasons for this. For one thing, the country has not been rocked by social cataclysms since the Civil War of 1948. For another, it is not ground down by brutal dictatorships. It has no armed forces and hence need not spend on armaments. For many years the Costa Ricans have not been involved in local conflicts.

For a long time now the country has been governed by representatives of the national bourgeoisie who realize that the country needs reforms capable of meeting at least some of the needs of the working population. A notable role was played here by José Figueres (the Costa Ricans call him Don Pepe), one of the founders and leaders of the national reform Party of National Liberation. At one time he was President, and it was his government that took steps towards democratizing internal political life. The big banks, railways, and power plants were nationalized, and impetus given to the development of medium and small-scale enterprise. In the seventies 22 enterprises were combined in the state-owned Codesa Corporation.

At Bidding from Without

In recent years the waves of economic crises sweeping the Latin American continent have hit Costa Rica as well.

The seedlings of coffee trees, the principal wealth of Costa Rica, are grown on these mountain slopes.

Photo from the National Geographic Magazine (U.S.A.)

Costa Rica has had to turn for aid to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the U.S. Agency for International Development. As a result, the country's foreign debt, which a few years ago amounted to roughly $2 billion, now runs to nearly $4.5 billion, in per capita terms the biggest debt in Latin America.

In exchange for credits, the government has been compelled to make considerable concessions. For instance, the stocks of the Codesa Corporation were in effect sold. The government of President Monge has thrown the doors wide open to foreign capital, above all American. And there has been a notable outflow of capital owing to the weakening of customs and banking controls.

In an interview to your correspondent, Humberto Vargas, General Secretary of the Costa Rican People's Vanguard Party, stressed that the economic crisis is deepening, even though officially this has not been conceded. New negotiations with foreign banks are in the offing and could result in new fettering commitments. In 1987, for instance, Costa

Rica will have to pay foreign creditors a sum equivalent to its total export earnings in interest alone. Such a policy is bound to have serious socio-economic consequences. At the present time, Vargas said, unemployment is markedly growing, though the authorities claim the contrary. According to official statistics, 57 per cent of the population are in need of housing. In the past 15 years the number of poor families has trebled. The rural population is particularly hard hit owing to unfair distribution of land: 1.3 per cent of all holdings account for 36.1 per cent of the total land area, while 32.2 per cent add up to only 1.7 per cent of the arable.

"Look at the way income is distributed," Vargas said. "The well-to-do, who account for 20 per cent of the population, now get more than half of the national income. Under pressure from the International Monetary Fund and other Western financial organizations, which now have a decisive say in our economy, the state is spending less and less on education, public health and other social needs. It is known that negotiations are under way with the World Bank for a $40 million credit. But we will get this money only if 5,000 state employees are dismissed, the National Production Council abolished, and control lifted on the prices of basic foodstuffs. With a view to further strengthening the positions of the transnational monopolies the World Bank also insists that we refrain from carrying out some protectionist measures to safeguard our national industry."

Since this interview, the press has reported that Costa Rica has been granted a loan on exceedingly unfavourable terms. It is clear that observance of these conditions will only aggravate the crisis phenomena.

The National Theatre in San Jose.

In his inaugural speech on May 8, President Oscar Arias Sanchez admitted that the economy was experiencing difficulties. He promised to modernize the structure of production, build 80,000 dwelling houses and create 25,000 new jobs annually. He also said that Costa Rica would continue to live up to its financial obligations.

Is Costa Rica Neutral?

In the Western press Costa Rica is sometimes called the "Central American Switzerland" in view of its peaceful policy and striving to remain neutral. Former President Rodrigo Carazo told your correspondent that he agreed with this definition. The Monge government, he said, had officially declared that Costa Rica would adhere to a policy of active neutrality in the conflict situation prevailing in Central America.

How does this neutrality look in practice? In the military sphere Costa Rica, to all appearances, is indeed neutral. No military manoeuvres aimed against other countries are held on its territory. On the other hand, the local mass media systematically carry anti-Sandinist propaganda. Writings of this order fill Costa Rican bookshops as well. All manner of statements and exhortations coming from Nicaraguan counter-revolutionary organizations and groups are readily published. On Saturdays the newspaper Prensa Libre puts out a special supplement entitled "Nicaragua Today." It is written for American money by a group of counterrevolutionary newspapermen.

Speaking of the Costa Rica press, ex-President Daniel Oduber said that its owners adhere mainly to right-wing views and are bigger extremists than some of the U.S. rights. One indeed gets the impression that Costa Rica has become a victim of psychological warfare. Washington is out to make it an ideological springboard for attacks on Nicaragua, for a propaganda offensive against the national liberation movement in the region as a whole. Nor have these efforts been in vain. In the opinion of José Figueres, "Costa Rica is the most pro-American country on the Latin American continent."

Washington has scored a notable success in this "non-shooting war." A Voice of America transmitter has been set up on Costa Rican territory. In mockery of national dignity the transmitter is called Radio Costa Rica and is owned by a specially-founded Costa Rican Information and Cultural Associa-

Poor people live in these shanties of cardboard and corrugated iron.

tion. The radio station, which cost $3.5 million, is a sort of U.S. radio-electronic and military enclave guarded by television cameras, warning systems and fortifications capable of withstanding even a tank attack.

Uninvited "Guests"

It is a well-known fact that some Nicaraguan counterrevolutionary organizations have ensconsed themselves in Costa Rica. Some 2,000 armed bandits, belonging to various groups of Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries and mostly to the organization that styles itself the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, have entrenched themselves there. This organization is mostly based in Honduras, but latterly some of its units have shifted to Costa Rica to set up a southern front against the Sandinists and try to establish control over other groups of contras. Their armed sallies in the border zone between Costa Rica and Nicaragua have repeatedly caused friction on the frontier and violated Costa Rican neutrality. Even now there are estates in the border zone which are in effect bases of the contras. They have support bases in Quesada, the port of Limon and in the capital, where their offices, hospitals and radio stations are located. One of the operational centres is situated on the estate of one John Hull. This centre serves also as a communications link between the contras and the U.S. mercenary organization Civilian Military Assistance. Through it aid from CIA-controlled American private reactionary organizations is shipped to the contras.

The Costa Rican Civil Guard, the country's law enforcement force, has on repeated occasions disarmed separate groups of bandits, but it is not in a position to exercise control over border districts difficult of access. Moreover, the progressive press has reported instances of cooperation between the Civil Guard and the contras.

While the Costa Rican authorities do not allow the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries to go in for too much sabre rattling, no restrictions are placed on their political activity. I asked Rodrigo Carazo about the dangers with which the presence of the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries is fraught for Costa Rica. The ex-president said that thanks to the efforts of the Monge administration they now present fewer problems than before. Nevertheless, he said, since Costa Rica traditionally extends political asylum to people of all political affiliations the contras are in a position to carry on their subversive activity against their former homeland if they do not have recourse to violence and do not violate local laws.

Diverse U.S. agencies, and not least of all the CIA, take advantage of this to involve Costa Rica in anti-Nicaraguan actions. It is not by chance that at the May meeting of the top leaders of Central American countries—the Contadora group and the Contadora support group—which was held at the time of the transfer of power to the new President, Oscar Arias Sanchez, Costa Rica submitted a document that was evaluated as evidence of open interference in the internal affairs of Nicaragua. It contained a call to the Nicaraguans to revise the draft of the new Nicaraguan constitution then under discussion and to hold new elections. It was proposed that the "stage-by-stage democratization of Nicaragua" be effected within two years.

The crude pressuring failed of its purpose. The so-called "mini-summit" met with fiasco, unable even to agree on a joint declaration. Peruvian President Alan Garcia and his Colombian counterpart Belisario Betancur rejected the proposed document and left San Jose before the meeting was over.

On the day of Sanchez's inauguration the press carried, in the form of paid advertisements, statements issued by Nicaraguan counterrevolutionary organizations containing slanderous attacks against the Sandinists and demanding the imposition of sanctions against them if they did not make concessions to the counterrevolutionaries. The campaign was evidence of organized pressure on the new government. The pressure worked, and one of the government's first moves was to join with El Salvador and Honduras in torpedoing the efforts of the Contadora group at U.S. bidding. Judging by a statement made by Costa Rica's Foreign Minister Madrigal, the lineup of the three countries is more concerned with Nicaragua's internal state structure than with the settlement of the conflict racking the region. The minister's call for "fraternal pressure" on Nicaragua to bring about "democratic changes" there was commended by the U.S. President.

In the Event of Intervention

The foreign press has carried a great many reports about attemps by the United States to harness Costa Rica to its military chariot. High-placed Pentagon officials, including officers of the U.S. Southern Command quartered in Panama, have become frequent visitors to the country.

During a visit to San Jose, General Paul Gorman, former chief of the U.S. Southern Command, urged the deployment along the Nicaraguan frontier of 1,000 U.S. reservists, supposedly to "protect" Costa Rica. He also insisted on the production of military equipment for the Pentagon at Costa Rican industrial enterprises. The government displayed common sense and did not accept the proposal. Nevertheless, Washington has succeeded in influencing Costa Rica. For one thing, the U.S. has allocated it sizable sums for military purposes.

The journal Pensamiento Propio, published in Nicaragua by the Regional Economic and Social Studies Coordination Centre, cites facts and figures testifying to a definite tendency towards militarization in Costa Rica. U.S. economic aid for military purposes totalled $190 million in 1982-85. Last year the 252 Costa Rican police were given training at military schools in the U.S. and Panama. Similar training courses were attended by 1,220 members of the Civil Guard under U.S. green beret instructors. It is estimated that more Costa Ricans than nationals of any other country have received training at the U.S. military schools. The Costa Rican police are equipped with weapons manufactured in the U.S., South Korea and the F.R.G.

There is an American military training base at Murcielago near the Nicaraguan frontier. The airport at Palmar, in the south, is being expanded, for which 5.5 million colones ($1 is roughly 55 colones) has been allocated. The sum of 10 million colones has been appropriated for the modernization of the base at Los Chiles in the north.

Commenting on this, Manuel Mora Valverde, a prominent public figure and leader of the Costa Rican People's Party, said that it has not yet come to militarization so far, though the U.S., with its policy of state terrorism, is creating the preconditions for this. It is to this end that airfields are being modernized and American army engineers are rebuilding roads and bridges. In the event of direct intervention against Nicaragua these communication facilities would be used for airlifting U.S. troops from Panama.

It is clear that Costa Rica's economic difficulties and the decline of its living standard are associated with the policy pursued by Washington, which is impelling the country towards gradual militarization. The Costa Ricans are aware that the political standards of the "Central American Switzerland," which have allowed the implementation of some reforms in the interests of the people, are now being threatened. This cannot but cause growing anxiety among the broad masses.

San Jose—Managua

The Palette of Martin Jonas

In summer the sprawling village of Kovacica in Vojvodina, Yugoslavia, is surrounded by fields of golden wheat and plantations of maize and sunflower that start, as it were, on its very doorstep. In winter, the entire expanse is carpeted with snow. The inhabitants of Kovacica, like those of the many other hamlets in the Socialist Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, are Slovaks, an industrious, gifted and hospitable people.

About half a century ago Martin Paluska, almost unknown at the time,

Martin Jonas at work.

Photo from the "Vojvodina" collection (Yugoslavia)

exhibited several of his pictures for the enjoyment of fellow villagers. Shortly afterwards Jan Sokol, Vladimir Botos, Jan Knjazovac and other peasants emulated his example. The pictures they painted reflected their immediate environment—family, neighbours and country scenes. In 1952 they had their first local show of, for the most part, portraits of farm workers, lyrical landscapes, and genre paintings. The exhibition drew the attention of connoisseurs in Belgrade; newsmen and critics flocked to the scene and, as a result, three years later Yugoslavia's first ever rural picture gallery opened there.

Today, Kovacica folk art is famous outside the country, and the person whose efforts have been largely responsible for this is Martin Jonas.

I have known Martin Jonas for some time now, having seen him not only at exhibitions in Belgrade, but also as a welcome visitor to his home in Kovacica.

Martin, a broad-shouldered man of medium height garbed in unassuming peasant dress, is hale and hearty despite his 60-odd years. He shook my hand firmly as he invited me to step into his studio and drink a cup of freshly brewed coffee. His face often lights up with a gentle enchanting smile. His powerful hands accustomed to the hard work of a farmer, are folded on his lap.

"I first began to draw when I was a small boy," he told me, "earning the highest praise at drawing lessons at elementary school. I adored looking out the parlour window and seeing villagers in their Sunday best, folk carnivals and wedding trains. During the long winter evenings, my father would gather a group of fellow villagers to discuss in lengthy, circumstantial detail local news, prospects for the crops, and forthcoming fairs. I would creep under our large round table and sit there till midnight, listening to their conversation and looking at their horny, veined hands. My childhood recollections are mirrored in many of my pictures."

During the past war Martin, then in his early teens, was driven off to do forced labour. At the time the Soviet Army was advancing from the east, breaking down the stubborn resistance of Hitler's Wehrmacht, and the nazis were frantically throwing up fortifications. Martin eventually managed to escape from the forced labour camp. He joined the partisans and in September 1944 met his first Soviet soldiers.

"They were mostly elderly, war veterans," he recalls. "At the time I was wearing a tall sheepskin hat. One Soviet soldier plucked it off, pinned a red star onto it, and said with grin: 'There, now, Martin, you're a real Cossack from the Kuban!' I was surrounded by war-weary people, longing to return to their families, I was then awfully skinny and very probably reminded them of their own children at home. Afterwards I started learning Russian, and always wanted to visit the Soviet Union at least once to see how people live there."

Martin finally realized his dream in the summer of 1983, when the U.S.S.R. Union of Artists organized an exhibition of his work at Moscow's House of Friendship with the Peoples of Foreign Countries.

"In the past 10-15 years I have had shows in Finland, Czechoslovakia, France, Italy, Switzerland, the U.S., and Australia," he says. "But I went to Moscow with especially warm feelings, as I knew I would be visiting the closest of friends. I was amazed by Soviet hospitality and kindness."

Martin modestly passed over the enthusiastic reception his exhibition was given in Moscow.

"I always try to be sincere, to depict what I see and know and at the same time convey my feelings and thoughts," Martin observes. "I know what I want to paint and think it pointless to work for a select handful of snobs. Scarcely anyone wants to be shown puzzles devoid of content. And though I agree that artists should seek new forms, they should never obscure meaning and content."

L. KHARKOV

Belgrade—Moscow

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TAKING UP A POINT

To each new piece of sabre rattling against you, to each new escalation of the arms race,you reply with new proposals to negotiate, with new peace bids. While you take pride in your highly moral stand, certain quarters continue to prepare for war against you. It is naive to think that these irreconcilable, brutal moneygrubbers will heed such "abstract" notions as morality, honour, commitment to pledges, etc. I think Soviet patience will not yield the desired results in this case. Rather will it lull popular vigilance and ease the West's way to war.

G.S.
British Columbia, Canada

It seems to me as if the U.S.S.R. is always backing down while the U.S., imperialism generally, is toughening its demands. You have taken initiatives enough. Unless the U.S. stops nuclear testing, there should be no extension of the moratorium. Not one more step back. Otherwise we may see a disaster far worse than that of 1941.

Vaclav KOCI
Pardubice, Czechoslovakia

I wholeheartedly support Mikhail Gorbachev's statement. I too raise my voice for peace on Earth, an end to nuclear testing, and a complete ban on atomic weapons. Yet I am anxious. Won't the Americans think that we are demobilizing, that in time we shall be less strong, in the sense that we will lag behind present-day levels of armaments?

L. KOVALENKO
Donetsk Region, U.S.S.R.

ALEXANDER BOVIN, Izvestia news analyst, replies:

I understand what motivates these letters to New Times, their concern, and their anxiety. Yet, I am sure that the Soviet political leaders who decided to extend the moratorium were aware of this concern and realized what motivated this anxiety.

Let us analyze the Gorbachev statement once again and attempt to assess the situation together.

Let me begin by noting that as a rule responsible political decisions are not easily taken. This is certainly the case with regard to the decision taken by the CPSU Central Committee Political Bureau and Soviet government to extend the unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions. Mikhail Gorbachev said this was not a simple move, but an extraordinarily responsible and difficult one. Indeed, to adopt the right decision, it was essential to give the fullest consideration to every aspect of the problem, and compare political with military-technological factors.

We have now had no tests for over a year. Conventional logic suggests that if tests are needed to strengthen security, a unilateral refusal to conduct such tests could adversely affect national security and place the U.S. at a strategic advantage.

There is good reason to think so. But in the first place we, like the Americans, have substantial reserves of strength, which means that it would be hard to gain, or lose, any essential strategic advantage. Maintaining military-strategic parity is the best antidote to any ventures in this situation. In the second place, there is a time limit to unilateral action. If Washington continues with its stubborn "No," if it continues to detonate nuclear devices, we shall be forced to resume testing.

Yet the main thing, as I see it, is that in this nuclear age security built on arms escalation becomes increasingly dangerous.

You must agree that the more weapons we have, the more mistrust there will be, and the more there is of that the greater the likelihood will be of these weapons being used. Only political accord, a reciprocal agreement to cut back and subsequently completely abolish nuclear weapons can give us genuine security.

Our approach to nuclear explosions, along with other concrete proposals and concrete actions, is geared to the attainment of this fundamental objective.

All analogies are tentative and conventional. However, let us seek a parallel with the game of chess currently popular the world over. To gain in quality the player may sacrifice quantity. The same may be said of the moratorium. For the time being its political advantages outweigh the disadvantages in the sphere of military technology.

I mean that by extending the moratorium we are strengthening the Soviet Union's political position, and our country's prestige. We are stepping up the pressure against the Americans, curtailing their freedom of action, and proving their helpless, invented arguments invalid. We are also giving an additional incentive to the anti-war and anti-nuclear movement, and are strengthening the position of the non-aligned countries.

The Soviet Union is saying again and again that we should take a new approach to the entire range of issues related to security, and proceed from a balance based on fear to one based on trust, a balance of interests, as only this approach accords with the realities of our nuclear age.

I fully admit that we may not reach agreement with the present U.S. Administration. However, the history of that country does not end with Reagan's presidency. Our action has the long term in mind.

Now about 1941. I think a comparison of this nature is wrong. It fails to recognize the fundamental changes of quality since then in the sphere of military strategy. Today no potential aggressor can hope to win. He who shoots first dies second. That is how the matter stands and the Americans realize this. In this context the surprise factor also appears in a different light. Today nobody will be caught napping. Retaliation is inevitable.

Such is the picture.

So there is no need for anxiety. We know who we are dealing with. We have no illusions. We are strong enough not to accept the "rules of the game" that they want us to play. To brawn we oppose brawn plus brain. To adventurist hankerings we oppose a sense of responsibility, fortitude and conviction, the conviction that humanity will be able to surmount the crisis phase, avoid the catastrophe, and create a world without wars and without arms.

Is this utopian? The goal of history is, after all, to make utopia a reality.

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